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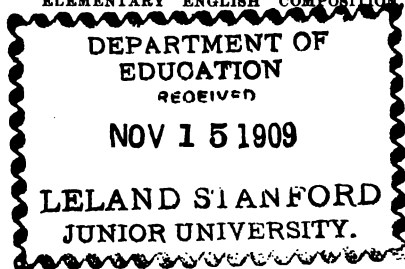
*DESIGNED FOR USE IN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS*

BY

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO
THE MEMORY OF HARTLEY
HUNTINGTON • LOVING ALL
NATURE, KIND TO ALL THINGS
THAT LIVE, EVER PLEASANT
TO PARENT AND PLAYMATE,
EVER READY FOR FROLIC OR
JOKE OR TASK, QUICK TO
SHARE ANOTHER'S TROUBLE,
QUICK TO RESENT A WRONG,
HE WAS AS MANLY A LITTLE
FELLOW AS WE SHALL EVER
LOOK UPON AGAIN • • •

PREFACE

IN all this talk about teaching English composition in secondary schools, going on heatedly now some twelve or more years, one very essential matter seems seldom to have been thought of, and never fully grasped. It is this: that if ever boys and girls are to learn to express themselves easily and naturally in writing, and with anything like the facility with which they express themselves in talk, they must be taught at the start, not "rules" of writing, but *habits* of writing. This is because they must be brought to feel fully and vividly, and that too at the very entrance to their work in composition, that writing deals primarily with ideas rather than with words, with what one has to say rather than with how one is to say it; and that they themselves already have an abundance of fresh, entertaining ideas, peculiarly their own, which they can put into their school themes, and which it is really great fun to put there,—lessons to be learned, not by any rule of thumb, but by habit alone.

A few years ago it was the fashion to begin a text-book on English composition with a chapter on words, the last thing a boy or a girl learning to write ought to study; and now, although the chapter on words is usually shifted to the end of the book, it is all too frequently the custom to begin with a review of English grammar, a treatise on punctuation, or some other of the miscellaneous trappings

of composition. Here and there, indeed, a writer seems to have realized, all too dimly, however, that a book on English composition ought to begin with something else than a review of grammar or a treatise on punctuation, and has therefore devoted some of his earlier pages, but seldom at the very front of his book, to matters like subjects and titles, selection of material, outlines, and the like. But if the truth would be told, most books on English composition begin very far away indeed, and then back and fill in a most intolerable manner.

Surely, the only order by which boys and girls can be taught at the start, not "rules" of writing, but *habits* of writing, the only order on which the whole course in English composition should be based, is the order a trained writer lays down for himself more or less instinctively in the writing of a specific composition — an essay, say, which may be taken as the type of written discourse. And right here it may be well to urge that a composition is really a growth — a thing of life. It is like a flowering plant: there is the seed, the root sent downward into the earth for drink and food, the stalk shot upward for light and air, and by and by the perfect flower. The growth of the plant is always the same: the root always grows downward, the stalk always shoots upward, and the flower comes last of all. How much better do we understand the flower when we understand how it has grown from the seed! How much better, likewise, will boys and girls understand the writing of a composition when they understand how a composition grows from its germinal idea in the mind!

What, then, is the order a trained writer lays down for himself more or less instinctively in the writing of an

essay? At last analysis the order is substantially this: first, he chooses the subject of his essay; next, he limits that subject to the purpose in hand; then he gathers his material, selects the material gathered and arranges what is left, and, after that, he may even determine, in a general way at least, the sort of paragraphs he will write, before he sets about the real task of writing. Having done this much by way of *prevision*, and having then written with the rapidity that enthusiasm always begets, he next proceeds to matters of *revision*, — to the remodeling of his sentences and the betterment of his diction.¹ Some step in this process, it is true, may, in some particular bit of writing, be omitted, or taken so easily that the writer is scarcely conscious of having taken it; but, as a general thing, each step is taken, and taken in precisely the order stated.

Therefore the first four chapters in this book (Parts I and II), which constitute a reasonably systematic course in the elements of composition, are arranged in the order in which we may suppose a trained writer, working under normal conditions, would plan and write a single essay. Chapter I, which deals with the whole composition, affords practice in each separate stage of this order, so that by the time Chapter II is reached, the order of thus rightly planning and writing an essay is developed into a habit. Chapter II takes up the paragraph, the first of the three elements of the whole composition to receive the attention of a writer, and treats first of isolated paragraphs (Sections 12–24), and then of related paragraphs as they stand together in the whole composition (Sections 25–27).

¹ The order is further explained in Section 10, Exercise 21, and at pages 131–132.

Thus far the work of the course has to do mainly with matters of planning, since we plan or prewise our whole compositions and our paragraphs before we actually write them. Part I, therefore, is styled "Planning and Writing." At this point the work changes, and has to do mainly with matters of rewriting. This is because Chapters III and IV (Part II) deal with sentences and words, which we never plan or prewise, but first write, and then revise or rewrite. Part II, therefore, having to do mainly with the work of rewriting, which, however, always follows writing itself, is styled "Writing and Rewriting."¹

Part III treats of letter-writing and the four kinds of composition, — narration, description, explanation (exposition), and argument. Until a few years ago these subjects, with the exception of letter-writing, were reserved for the college, but they are now taught in the better sort of high school. This is as it should be, because here at last the student comes to see how composition enters into the larger interests of life, and seeing this at the most sensitive and quickening period of his mental and moral growth, the ultimate effect is correspondingly great. Nor should it be forgotten that those high school students who are never to enter college, and who, unfortunately,

¹ In Part II, where the student is likely to lose sight of this basal idea, that sentences and words are the objects of revision, and not of prevision, the exercises are so planned as to keep the idea always before him. There he is required to write his theme first at white heat, with his mind only on what he wants to say, not on how he wants to say it, — not, that is, on any "rule" of sentence or word, — and after that to revise slowly, with his mind on how it is best to say what he has already said imperfectly and in haste. This is the one way to write at all times; especially is it the way to write if results worth while are to be accomplished in the study of sentences and words.

are still very greatly in the majority, have a clear right to demand instruction in these most practical subjects. More than ordinary care, therefore, has been taken to treat these subjects in a fresh, novel way; to free them from subtle and useless distinctions of all sorts, and, above all, to bring them into close touch with the student's own experiences. The chapter on letter-writing, because of the supreme importance of letter-writing in the work of the world, has been treated with unusual fulness.

So much for the plan of the book. This utilization of a natural, logical order, so essential in the teaching of habits of any sort, and especially essential in the teaching of habits of writing, establishes, it is hoped, the *raison d'être* of the book. Among other distinguishing features of the book are the following:—

1. Habits of writing, as already intimated, are given altogether greater prominence than “rules” of writing. To do this, the rubbish of traditional rhetoric has been rigidly excluded, and rhetorical theory simplified as much as it well could be. Chapters on grammar, the novel and the drama, poetic and literary forms, literary criticism, etc., etc., still met with in books of this sort, will not be found here. Such of these subjects as deal with the critical study of literature, and really need to be taught in high schools, had best be taught in the courses in British and American classics. The few rules of grammar that need to be reviewed had best be brought up as violations of them are found in the students' papers. What is then said by way of illustration and enforcement will have some effect, as it never will have where grammar is taught in a chapter by itself and merely as a compendium of rules. Such exclusion as this has left room for the

proper treatment of the really essential principles of good writing, which at last resort are surprisingly few — so few, indeed, that the best of them may very well be taught as habits.

4

2. Creative work precedes and outranks critical work. Practical teachers know how desirable it is to get their students to writing freely and naturally at the start, so that later on they will not be frightened into silence by red ink and the blue pencil. With some bright exceptions, boys and girls of high school age, though able to talk brightly and entertainingly enough, seem quite unable to express themselves in writing. Hamper them at the start with critical details, and their confusion is pitiful; but help them to find something to say, by teaching them that they already have something to say, and they soon begin to write with something of the facility — a blundering facility, of course — with which they talk. In this book, Part I aims to develop the student's creative faculty, and Part II his critical faculty. Through Part I, therefore, the direction of the teacher should be stimulating, encouraging, and never naggingly critical; the student should be made to feel his freedom; he should be permitted to write about the things that really interest him, and to write about them in pretty much the way he wants to write about them; what is individual in him — what makes him different from his mates — should be developed; the teacher should study his students more than his students' papers; the weeds can be pulled up when Part II is reached. Part III again brings into play, even more freely than Part I, the student's larger inventive powers, thus giving to creative work the prominence it deserves.

3. From start to finish, effort is made to bring out the student's individuality and to secure personality in his written work. Although boys and girls cannot for want of training write with facility at the start, they yet have more interesting odds and ends of experience than they can ever put into their school themes. Just a little tact is needed to get at these personal experiences of the student, and in this way to bridge over the chasm that ordinarily separates his writing from his life. Appeal must be made to what he has lived, — to his out-of-school hours, to his games, to his home interests, or to whatever specially absorbs his waking thoughts, — and also to what he *can* live, thereby adding to his stock of experiences. Now, the exercises in this book are just so many attempts to get at this mental life of the student, or to direct it into new channels and then to get at it. The whole book, indeed, is one long, personal letter to the student, cut up into sections, and interlarded with illustrative selections, to make clear to him the thing taught, and with exercises, to get him to do the thing taught. This appeal to the student's own self, which is different from all other selves, begins in *A Word at the Start*,¹ and continues to the end of the book. He is everywhere impressed with the fact that good writing is after all more or less a matter of character, his own problem being to put his own self into his writing, and not some other self.

4. Use is made of the student's social instincts. At the very start the student is advised to put himself in others' places,² particularly in his school-fellows' places, and, from their ways of looking at things, thoughtfully to consider just how they are likely to receive what he

¹ See page xxvi.

² See pages xxvi-xxvii.

writes. He is there told that he is not only to put his own self, and not some other self, into his writing, but that he is always to write *to* somebody. "The shots that hit are the shots that tell." Section 3 shows him how to word his subject so as to fit his theme to some particular set of readers, and, lest he should forget the lesson taught there, numerous exercises throughout the book are so worded as to bring it to mind again. As an incentive to good writing, this appeal to the student's social instincts is only less powerful than the appeal to his individuality. "Be yourself" is the first great lesson of writing; "put yourself in others' places," the second.

5. The paragraph is made the basis of the written work in Parts I and II, and, to a considerable extent, in Part III also.¹ As stated at the beginning of Chapter II, the easiest way to learn to write is to write innumerable paragraphs. This is because the paragraph is really an essay in little, and therefore contains every element of an essay in large, or what is commonly referred to in this book as a whole composition. The paragraph, also, has for the practice work of the school the inestimable advantage of being small in compass, and can, therefore, be easily conceived of as a whole and easily managed by the student, and easily corrected by the teacher. The paragraph, likewise, is capable of almost infinite variety of theme and treatment.²

¹ The longer composition, however, is not slighted. Chapter I and Sections 25-27 of Chapter II afford ample instruction and practice in handling themes of several paragraphs, of which longer themes one should be written every six or eight weeks.

² See further, Section 12 and pages 131-132. This idea of making the paragraph the basis of written work is of course no new idea. Alexander Bain, fully fifteen years ago, taught us the kingship of the paragraph.

6. "Helps to Study" have been appended to the more important illustrative selections, thus enforcing their proper bearing upon the principles set forth in the text. Many of the selections, particularly the longer selections, have been so placed as to lead up inductively to the principles they illustrate.¹ These latter selections are intended to be studied first for their intrinsic interest, and then, after the sections they illustrate have been read, as models of illustration. All illustrative selections, it may be added, have been chosen with extreme care, in order that they might have a cultural, as well as an illustrative, value. The happy medium between selections modern and remote, popular and classical, has been sought, the aim being to bring all easily within the comprehension of the average boy or girl, and yet never to sink below the standard of literary practice.²

7. The exercises are unusually varied and abundant.³ One reason for the indifference of boys and girls to their English composition is the lack of novelty in the work commonly set for them to do. They are more than will-

The matter is emphasized here merely because certain recent writers on composition, seemingly led astray by the glitter of mere novelty, have relegated the paragraph to an inferior position.

¹ See Exercises 14, 17, 42, 64, 65, 66, etc.

² Specimens of defective English have been used in Part II only where necessary to make clear the thought, and are in each case distinctly labelled "Bad"; all told, there are probably not more than a dozen or fifteen of these. Nor are there more than one or two excerpts from students' papers. All this material is bound to seem unreal and factitious to the student unless taken from his own themes or the themes of his classmates. The teacher should begin at the start, therefore, to collect from his students' papers specimens of defective English, bad spelling, etc., and now and then make this material the basis of a "black-board talk" on the principles most frequently violated.

³ See the foot-note at page 4.

ing to work, and to work hard, provided only they are set to doing the things that excite their curiosity by appealing to their own life interests. In other words the right subject must be found for the right student. Special pains have been taken, therefore, not only to secure this needed novelty in the exercises, but to make them sufficient in number and kind to suit the likes and dislikes of widely different personalities. Not a little attention has been given to oral exercises, thus doing away with the artificial separation of written and oral composition. To make the book more teachable, class exercises and other devices, many of them new in text books, have been added here and there throughout the book.

And now just a word about the use of the book. The book can be used for a two-year course or a one-year course, or twice a week through the entire high school course of four years. If used for a two-year course, Parts I and II will afford work for the first year, and Part III for the second year. If used for a one-year course, some portions of the book will need to be omitted (Part II, say, can be used mainly for reference, and Chapter VIII omitted) and fewer exercises done under each section studied. The most satisfactory results will be obtained if the book is studied in the order of presentation, and, however used, it should be remembered that Part I is fundamental, and should, therefore, under no circumstances be slighted or taken out of its normal order.

In the matter of criticism, as was suggested a page or so back, it is best during the work of Part I to help the

student by way of guidance and encouragement. During this period the teacher should try to find out what special power is in each student, and to develop that power or individuality as spontaneously and naturally as he can. At this stage no minute criticism of any sort should be offered, as the effect of this kind of criticism is bound to be deadening both to the student and to the teacher. As the trainer tries to get from his athlete all the speed he can, and last of all attends to the gait, so the teacher should try to get from his student writing as natural and spontaneous as he can do, and, last of all, gradually, by taking but one thing at a time, and winking at the rest, try to correct his faults. By this method the most diffident student can be brought to express himself in writing with comparative freedom, and those students who begin the work of composition with the notion that writing of every sort must be drudgery, can be brought to a realization of the pleasures of composition. After this development of the student's individuality is well started, the teacher's criticism may be more minute, but seldom merely negative. Except in cases of outright negligence, it will almost always be found more effective to bring to the student's attention those portions of his theme that are praiseworthy than to discourage him by continually centring his attention on those portions that are blameworthy. Indeed, in regard to defects, a little tact will set the student to correcting his own errors, and thus cultivate in him that habit of watchful carefulness in his writing that will be of so much use to him when he leaves school and has to do without his teacher's guidance. Never, during any part of the course, should a theme be criticised for more than one thing at a time,

and that should invariably be the particular thing the student was set to do in that particular theme. This will impress on the student's mind, as nothing else will the various principles in the theory of his practice.

In conclusion, let me ask the teachers who use this book to write me freely regarding its betterment. I shall be especially grateful for new devices for securing personality in the student's work, and for exercises of every sort that have proved more than commonly interesting and effective.

T. F. HUNTINGTON.

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA,
October 16, 1903.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A WORD AT THE START	xxiii

PART I

PLANNING AND WRITING

CHAPTER I

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION

SECTION		
1. How to Choose a Subject		3
2. How to Limit a Subject		5
3. How to Word a Subject		8
4. How to Take Notes		11
5. How to Gather Material		16
1. By seeing		16
2. By reading		21
3. By thinking		26
6. How to Select Material		29
7. How to Arrange Material		33
8. How to Write a Theme		41
9. How to Name a Theme		45

CHAPTER II

THE PARAGRAPH

12. What a Paragraph Is	51
13. The Paragraph Subject	56
14. The Subject-Sentence	59
15. Construction of Paragraphs	67
16. 1. By telling what a Thing is: Definition	70
17. 2. By telling what a Thing is <i>not</i> : Reversion	77

SECTION	P
18. 3. By telling what a Thing is like: Comparison . . .	
19. 4. By telling what a Thing is <i>not</i> like: Contrast . . .	
20. 5. By telling about One of a Number of Things: Example . . .	
21. 6. By telling a Thing in more than One Way: Restatement . . .	
22. Essentials of the Paragraph . . .	
1. It should have One Central Idea: Unity . . .	
23. 2. Its Chief Parts should readily catch the Eye: Mass . . .	
24. 3. It should read smoothly: Coherence . . .	
25. Binding Paragraphs Together . . .	
26. Length of Paragraphs . . .	
27. Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs . . .	

PART II

WRITING AND REWRITING

PLANNING, WRITING, AND REWRITING . . .	
--	--

CHAPTER III

THE SENTENCE

28. What a Sentence Is . . .	
29. Essentials of the Sentence . . .	
1. It should be Correct . . .	
30. 2. It should be Clear . . .	
31. 3. It should be Effective . . .	
32. 4. It should be Coherent . . .	
33. 5. It should have Unity . . .	
34. Kinds of Sentences . . .	
1. Declarative, Interrogative, Imperative, and Exclamatory Sentences . . .	
35. 2. Simple, Complex, and Compound Sentences . . .	
36. 3. Loose and Periodic Sentences . . .	
37. Balanced and Parallel Structures . . .	
38. Length of Sentences . . .	
39. Variety in Sentences . . .	

CONTENTS

xxi

CHAPTER IV

WORDS

SECTION	PAGE
40. Good Usage	167
41. 1. Present Usage	168
42. 2. National Usage	171
43. 3. Reputable Usage	177
44. Precision in the Use of Words	180
45. Vigor in the Use of Words	184
46. 1. Big Words and Little Words	187
47. 2. General Words and Specific Words	193
48. 3. Figurative Words and Literal Words	196
49. Elegance in the Use of Words	201

PART III

KINDS OF WRITING

THE FOUR KINDS OF WRITING	207
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER V

LETTER-WRITING

50. The Importance of Letter-Writing	209
51. The Parts of a Letter	210
52. Business Letters	218
53. Postal Cards and Telegrams	222
54. Advertisements and Applications	224
55. Official Letters	228
56. Invitations and Replies	230
57. Friendly Letters	232
58. Some Don'ts	236

CHAPTER VI

NARRATION

59. The Nature of Narration	247
60. The Elements of Narration	248

SECTION

61. The Purpose	
62. The Plot	
63. The Characters	
64. The Situation	
65. Movement in Stories	
66. Beginning and Ending a Story	
67. The Point of View	
68. Conversation in Stories	

CHAPTER VII

DESCRIPTION

69. The Nature of Description	
70. Perception by Sight	
71. Some Difficulties	
72. The Point of View	
73. The Point of Time	
74. The Central Thought	
75. Rapid Suggestion	
76. The Value of the Specific	
77. Sensations Other than of Sight	

CHAPTER VIII

EXPLANATION AND ARGUMENT

78. The Nature of Explanation	
79. Methods of Explanation	
80. The Nature of Argument	
81. The Proposition	
82. The Point at Issue	
83. The Proofs	
84. The Brief	
85. Preparation for Debate	

APPENDIX

I. How to prepare School Manuscripts	
II. How to punctuate	
INDEX	

A WORD AT THE START

A POOR French youth, who grew up to be a famous man, once went, in poor and mean attire, to pay a visit to one of Napoleon's statesmen, and, although indifferently received, he yet contrived to display so much intelligence and affability in the conversation that ensued, that, at the end of the colloquy, the statesman himself accompanied him, with all courtesy, to the door of the antechamber.

"My young friend," said the statesman, by way of apology for the frigidity of his reception, "we receive an unknown person according to his *dress*—we take leave of him according to his *merits*."

How often, my young reader, have you yourself been not only received, but taken leave of as well, according to your dress!—not the dress that clothes your person, indeed, but the dress that clothes your thoughts and feelings—your language! Older people are ever likely to judge a boy's or a girl's breeding and training by the sort of language he or she uses in speech and in writing. Thus, to take but a single instance, if you send to one capable of judging—and it is the good opinion of such a one that you care most for—an illegible scrawl for a letter, which is as full of careless spelling and punctuation and slipshod language, and of vulgar flourishes spread over weak thought and insincere

feeling, as it is of blots and erasures, he says to himself, if you are a boy, that you are either too lazy to take pains in your writing or too ignorant to know any better, and perhaps he ends by thinking that you are both lazy and of poor breeding and training; and, if you are a girl, he has his suspicions that you do up your hair pretty much as you write. It pays, then, to dress up your thoughts and feelings with every bit as much care and pride as you dress up your person—if you care to be well thought of.

But there is more, even, than being well thought of, in using good language; there is profit, and there is pleasure as well.

When you come to do your share of the world's work, you will learn—or you will not learn, for failures never learn this lesson—that that man is most successful who knows most about what he does, and who, for this reason, does what he does better than those about him. Now, if such a man has the language to make other men understand how he does these things so well, he becomes, by common consent, a leader of men, and, using their hands and their heads, helps himself to more of the world's rewards. By this means, the skilled workman becomes a foreman, the careful merchant becomes the head of a combine, the learned lawyer becomes a judge, the able statesman becomes a maker of laws, and the accomplished woman becomes a leader of society or a worker in philanthropy. But how if the workman, the merchant, the lawyer, the statesman, the woman, have not the language to make known to other people what they know? How if this power be locked within their own bosoms? If the workman cannot tell his

fellows how he does things, if the merchant cannot direct men, if the lawyer cannot make a plea or write a brief, if the statesman cannot make a speech or write an essay, if the woman cannot talk brightly to those she meets, of how much less profit to themselves and to others is all their knowledge!

I have said that there is pleasure in using good language, and so there is. And there is pleasure, likewise, in learning to write our English language, and very great profit, too, as there ever is in the study and making of a useful and beautiful thing. In learning to write, you study in a new way what others have written, and you are brought by this study to an appreciation of many of the finer effects of literature—an ever increasing joy. Then do you begin to delight in putting into words the thoughts, the feelings, and the doings, not only of yourself, but of those about you. Your mind is thus broadened in two ways at the same time: you see more in what you read, and you see more in yourself and in others and in nature; that is, in life. In many respects, learning to write is like going on a journey to far lands, where strange accents greet your ears and strange sights meet your eyes. You learn how men build their homes, and how the kings of men, the geniuses of the earth, rear their radiant palaces. You return from your journey, not able to erect a palace, perhaps, but able, at the very least, to build a commodious home to shelter the treasure you have accumulated.

But some men may go on a journey to far lands, and come back with minds as contracted as if they had never left their native town. For them a marble palace on the Tiber has no more meaning than Tibbu's hut of reeds and

grass on the Kongo. In like manner you may go on this journey, and bring nothing back with you.

To make this a profitable and pleasurable course, you will need to do three things: you will need (1) to be yourself, (2) to put yourself in others' places, and (3) to work.

(1) *Be yourself.* In the whole universe there is no one else who is precisely like yourself; there is no one else who knows precisely what you know. This yourself, which is different from all other selves, and this knowledge, which is different from all other knowledge, are to be the subject-matter of your themes.¹ You are yourself when you put this subject-matter into what you write; you are yourself when you use your own thoughts freely and honestly; but you are not yourself when, instead of using your own thoughts, you borrow the thoughts of other people.

(2) *Put yourself in others' places.* Put yourself, in particular, in your school-fellows' places, and, from their ways of looking at things, thoughtfully consider just how they are likely to receive what you are to write. No one ever made a speech that was worth listening to, and no one ever put together a piece of writing that was effective, who did not first put himself in the place of his hearers, or in the place of his readers, and think how they would be impressed by that speech, or by that piece of writing. This book is founded on the theory that you have something to say, and that you are going to say it to 'somebody; in this case, to your school-fellows. In other words, your school-fellows are to be your audience,

¹ The word *theme*, as used in this book, means a short composition, in any form, done as a school exercise.

and you will do well to take them seriously, for they will be your frankest and, it is to be hoped, your generous, if not your keenest and most sympathetic, critics. Do you then sincerely try to write so that they can understand what you write, so that they will be forcibly impressed by what you write, so that they will be pleased by what you write.

(3) *Work! Work! Work!* "Paderewski," said Paderewski himself to Princess Victoria, "was a drudge before he was a genius."

PART I
PLANNING AND WRITING

CHAPTER I

THE WHOLE COMPOSITION

SECTION I

How to Choose a Subject

THE best sort of subject for you to write about is one that you are really interested in and know something about. If you do or can know about your subject at first hand, and, above all, if you know more about your subject than anybody else does, so much the better; for, in either case, you will be using knowledge that is peculiarly your own. The way to find such a subject is to ask yourself some such questions as these: "What do I like best?" "What do I think about most?" "What do I talk about most?" "What things do I watch with most eagerness?" "What subjects of conversation do I listen to most intently?" "What books do I read with the keenest delight?" and so on; for beyond all doubt these are the things you are most interested in, these are the things you can write of most easily and most entertainingly. If, after asking yourself such questions as these, you find you are really interested in such things as football, tailless kites, stilts, or even shinny or mumble-the-peg¹ or meg-in-a-hole, and that you are not really interested in such things as aspiration and achievement,

¹ Or, perhaps you call it "mumbly-peg" or "mumblety-peg."

the personality of George Washington, the history of the English language, or the like, you should be frank enough to say so, and sincere enough to write what you yourself really think about the things that really interest you. Then you will have something to write about, you will have material all your own to put into your theme, and you will take enough pleasure in what you are doing to carry you through the mechanical work of composition, a work that boys and girls sometimes look upon as drudgery. Then, too, you will make use of your own thought and experience, and not the thought and experience of somebody else; you will be yourself, and not a mere echo of something or somebody else, and this perhaps is most important of all.

Exercise 1¹

Make a list of the things you have thought about during the past week that are of real interest to you. Thus, —

THINGS I HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT

1. The weeds in our streets.
2. How to make a box kite.
3. My neighbor at school.
4. The bird's nest in our garden.
5. What a flying bird can see.

¹ It is not intended that each student shall work through all the exercises in this book. A text-book of any sort, and especially a text-book on composition and rhetoric, is best used as a guide. The present book, therefore, will most effectively serve the ends for which it is written if its exercises are modified, by selection and substitution, to meet the special needs of each particular class. It is for this reason that the exercises are made so various and so numerous, thus lending themselves easily to whatever adjustment may be thought desirable.

NOTE. — At p. 347 you will find some hints on the preparation of school papers, which you will do well to observe, unless your teacher gives you other directions in their stead.

Exercise 2

Make a list of the things you have talked about quite recently that are of real interest to you. Give in each case the name of the person you talked with, together with the circumstances under which your conversation took place. Thus: —

THINGS I HAVE TALKED ABOUT

1. How to set up a springing board. Tom Sawyer. Tom and I were over at Fisher's Pond. We had been swimming, and were making plans to set up a springing board this coming Saturday.

2. What to do with rubbish. Helen Montague. Helen and I were up in our attic. We found three cheese-box lids, and we decided to make a work-table out of them. We can use the lids for shelves, and three old broomsticks will do for legs.

Exercise 3

1. Make a list of ten or fifteen things which you think you know more about than any of your schoolfellows, and which you think would be of some interest to them. Choose one subject on your list, the one you think is the most interesting, and tell what you know about it.

2. Write or talk about one subject on your list that some member of the class, after hearing your list read, or after reading it himself, thinks he would like to know something about.

SECTION 2

How to Limit a Subject

Most of the themes that you will be asked to write in this course will consist of a single paragraph. They will

be but a page or two in length. For themes as short as this you will soon discover that many of the subjects you think of, even the subjects that really interest you, will be so broad and general that you will have to limit or narrow them in some way or other if you desire to write about them at once briefly and entertainingly. You can hardly say, in a single paragraph, anything that is worth the saying about subjects as broad as "Fishing," "Flowers," "Painting," "Outdoor sports," and the like, however much these subjects may interest you. Subjects of this sort can be treated adequately only in a long essay or an entire volume, and by a writer who has had a long and intimate acquaintance with them. Try to write a single paragraph on such a subject, and you find yourself puzzled over where to begin and what to write, and this, too, even though you know a good deal about your subject. But if you limit such a subject until it comes right home to your own knowledge and interests, you find your wits started, and kept going, in a certain direction. You then know what to write and how to write it. You even begin to enjoy the art of writing, and what you write seems bright and diverting to others.

To illustrate. "Outdoor sports" is an interesting subject, but vastly too broad to be treated in a short theme. In its present form the subject includes outdoor sports of all kinds, in all times, and in all places—since the world's fun began. Select some one outdoor sport,— "Rowing," "Baseball," "Golf," or "Football,"—and you narrow the subject somewhat, but not sufficiently for your purpose. As you are to write only about those things that you are really interested in and know something about, and briefly too, you will need to bring the subject

as near to yourself as you can. The way to do this is to limit it to your own time and to your own place, and in this way to bring it within the circle of your own knowledge and experience. "How football was first played" and "Football at Rugby" are subjects limited in time and place, but the time and the place are not the time and the place that you know. You would have to use other people's thoughts to write about these subjects, and it is better to use your own. "How we won the last game of football," "What a touchdown is," "How to make a drop kick," and the like, are subjects that you yourself know something about at first hand. You do not need to borrow anybody's thoughts to write about them. You can use your own thoughts. These subjects are also sufficiently limited to admit of adequate treatment in a theme of a paragraph or two.

Exercise 4

Select any five of the following general subjects, and, by limiting them in any way that may occur to you, draw out from each general subject two subjects suitable for a theme of a single paragraph. Your final list of ten subjects should contain only such subjects as you actually care to write about, subjects having enough value to justify the time you would spend in thinking and writing about them. Test the worth of your final list by asking yourself these questions about each of your ten subjects: "Am I really interested in this subject, and do I know something about it at first hand?" "Can I treat this subject well in a single paragraph?" "Is this subject really worth writing about?" If any subject in your

list will not stand the test of these questions, cut it out, and put another in its place.

1. Needlework. 2. Fishing. 3. Parties. 4. Flowers. 5. Skating. 6. Collecting. 7. Painting. 8. Coasting. 9. First of April. 10. Games of ball. 11. Travelling. 12. Cycling. 13. Books. 14. Camping out. 15. Dogs. 16. War. 17. Inventions. 18. Animals. 19. Manners at table. 20. Newspapers. 21. Pictures. 22. Advertisements.

Exercise 5

Draw out from each of the following sources two subjects suitable for a short theme: —

1. Your own experience and observation.
2. The last book you read for pleasure.
3. Things talked about in your town.
4. Things talked about at school outside the class room.
5. Topics in to-day's newspaper.

SECTION 3

How to Word a Subject

After you have chosen a subject that you are really interested in and know something about, and after you have limited your subject until you think it is narrow enough to suit the space at your disposal, you will find it helpful to word it in a form that will show quite clearly just why you are writing about it and to whom. You know very well that when you talk to your schoolfellows you do not say the same things to each. You know also that when you write to Tom and to Arthur you do not write about the same things, because Tom likes games, and Arthur likes books. Now a school theme is pretty much like a talk or a letter. It is not enough merely to talk and to write about those things that you are interested in and know

something about ; you must talk and write about those things that other people are interested in and know something about as well, or, at the very least, you must talk and write about the things that you are interested in and know something about in a way to make them interesting to the people you talk and write to. This, in fact, is what you will always have to do out in the world, if ever you are to express your thoughts well enough to make them appeal effectively to those you wish to bend to your way of thinking. This is what the merchant, the lawyer, the preacher, every man who wins his way to success, does, has done, and will do. The unsuccessful people are those who never think what other people are interested in, who never put themselves in other people's places. The reason you will find it helpful, aside from the fact that you ought always to be thinking what other people are interested in, to word your subject in a form that will show quite clearly just why you are writing about it and to whom, is to keep you from forgetting this purpose while you are writing, and to help you to decide just what to write and what not to write.

Here are a few subjects worded in this manner: Not "The foot race in the fifth book of the *Æneid*," but "A description of the foot race in the fifth book of the *Æneid*, written to interest a boy fonder of sports than of ancient classics"; not "The first football defeat of the season," but "An attempt by one of the players to explain the first football defeat of the season to a young lady who does not understand football"; not "The location of a fine trout stream I know," but "Directions for finding a fine trout stream I know, written for a boy whom I cannot accompany to the spot." Subjects worded in this fashion are

to be used merely as guides to help you decide just what to write and what not to write, and by consequence to help you to think more definitely and more vigorously. They should of course never appear in any form in the theme itself.

Exercise 6

From the following list of subjects select five, and word them so they will show just why you are writing about them and to whom:—

1. A fight after school.
2. Aladdin's lamp — if I had it.
3. A day at the river side (the nearest stream).
4. My first day at school.
5. What I know about dogs.
6. What I saw this morning on my way to school.
7. What to do on a rainy day (indoor games, etc.).
8. A narrow escape (real).
9. Saturday pleasures.
10. Making whistles.
11. All-Hallow eve.
12. Making scrap-books.

Exercise 7

Write ten subjects that you think some member of your composition class would be interested in. Write this member's name at the head of your list of subjects; limit your subjects as required by Section 2, but do not word them in the form required by Section 3. After your list has been inspected by your teacher, hand it to the member of the class for whom it was written, and request him to return it at the beginning of the following recitation period, with the subjects he did not find of interest scratched off.

Exercise 8

Write five subjects that you think would be of interest to the entire class in composition; five of special interest to the class in botany, in physics, or in history; five of special interest to the entire school. Limit your subjects as required by Section 2.

Exercise 9

Write ten subjects, one of special interest to each of the following persons : —

1. A child four years old.
2. A man who is shiftless.
3. A newsboy who cannot read.
4. Somebody who feeds tramps.
5. A Democrat (or a Republican).
6. An old sea captain.
7. A country boy who has never been to a large city.
8. A girl who does not like to study.
9. A merchant who is seeking a location for a book store.
10. A good old lady.

SECTION 4

How to Take Notes

Before you take up the matter of gathering material for themes, which is the next subject to be treated in this book, you will need to know something about note-taking. You are a person of no ordinary powers if you can depend on your memory to recall at just the right moment the thoughts intrusted to its keeping. Memory is a sort of trickster, a kind of cheat, who hides some of our thoughts in out-of-the-way places where they are difficult to find, and who dresses up others in new and strange coats, so that they are scarcely known when found. To make sure

of your thoughts, therefore, you must form the habit of setting them down immediately upon the thinking of them. If you are reading, and wait for the end of the chapter; if you are walking, and wait for your return home; if you wake from your sleep, and wait for the coming of dawn,—the thought that seems to you worth preserving will either desert you entirely or lose the first fine glow of its conception. You must set it down at once, even though it be a bother. It is related of Scott that he kept pen and paper continually by his bedside, and that he often rose in the night to put down the thoughts that came to him. It is said of Jonathan Edwards, the noted New England philosopher and preacher of the eighteenth century, that when he rode or walked he kept on thinking, and that for every thought he pinned a bit of paper to his clothes. How he must have looked after a day of busy thinking, you can easily imagine. Stevenson says that all through his boyhood and youth he kept two books in his pocket, one to read, and one to write in. As he walked, his mind was busy fitting what he saw with appropriate words, and when he sat by the roadside, he either read, or noted down the features of the scene, or commemorated some halting stanzas. Thus he lived with words, having vowed that he would learn to write. "That was a proficiency that tempted me," he writes, "and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself."¹

But it is not every boy and girl who has the spunk to do what the boy Stevenson did. To take good notes, however, is a most practical accomplishment, in business as well as in professional life. The way to take notes, for the matter now in hand, is to jot down your thoughts just as you think

¹ Stevenson, *A College Magazine*.

them, and you think your thoughts, not in complete sentences, but in fragments of sentences, or, rather, in pictures which answer to fragments of sentences, and which flash one after another through your mind. Yesterday you took a walk, let us suppose, through Dark Lane, and home through the village of Danvers. The landscape was wholly autumnal. You saw an elderly man laden with two dry, yellow, rustling bundles of Indian corn-stalks,—a good personification of Autumn. You saw another man digging up potatoes. Rows of white cabbages lay ripening in the sun. There were whole fields of Indian corn, and so on.¹ If to-day you wish to write an account of what you saw, you will sit for a moment thinking over the scene of yesterday, and the mental pictures you then took will again flash one after another through your mind. You will not think, “Yesterday I took a walk through Dark Lane, and came home through the village of Danvers,” or, “The landscape was wholly autumnal,” but something after this fashion: “Yesterday walked through Dark Lane—home through Danvers—landscape autumnal—old man with two bundles of corn-stalks—dry, yellow, rustling—good personification of Autumn—another man digging up potatoes—rows of cabbages ripening—fields of corn.” And so in taking notes, for immediate use, of what you see, of what you think, of what you read, of what you hear, use “catch-words” and fragments of sentences. These will be all you need to recall your thoughts when you wish to make use of them in a letter, in a school theme, in a debate, or in a speech. You can then fill out the sentences and put in the proper punctuation marks.

¹ See Hawthorne, *American Note-Books*, October 25 [1836].

However, if your notes are to be preserved for any length of time, or if they are intended for the eye of another, as in your note-books in physics, in literature, or in history, you should bestow as much care and skill upon them as you do upon a well-constructed theme.¹

Exercise 10

On three different days take a walk to some place that you are in the habit of resorting to; on the first day make a record in note form, as explained in Section 4, of all that you see that you think is worth setting down; on each of the succeeding days record in the same manner the things you had not previously seen. This is an exercise both in note-taking and in seeing things, and will help you to understand what is said in the section about gathering material by seeing things.

Exercise 11

1. Make a record, in note form, of the lesson assigned in each of your studies to-morrow. The lesson assigned in American Classics, for instance, may be something like this: "For to-morrow review to-day's lesson, especially the paragraph on pages 249-251, in which Lowell compares Lincoln with Henry IV. Write out and hand in an outline of this paragraph. Study carefully, and learn by heart, if you have the time, Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*,

¹ This distinction between rough, hastily written notes, mere accumulated and unorganized points for future composition, and a careful digest of well-organized material, that is, material already composed, cannot be too strongly emphasized. In this section, and in the exercises that follow, attention is centred on the first kind of note-taking because of the immediate bearing of this section on the sections that follow. See Exercise 15, especially 2.

pages 269-270, and read the account given of how Lincoln learned to write, pages 267-269." Your record may take the following form, a paragraph being given to the notes of each lesson: —

LESSONS FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

In American Classics: Review pp. 249-251 — outline paragraph — study (memorize) pp. 269-270 — read pp. 267-269.

In Algebra: etc.

2. Make a record, in note form, of what is said during the first ten or fifteen minutes of some recitation.

3. Take notes of some speech, lecture, or sermon. Try to get the speaker's main ideas, jotting down a word or two to recall his proofs or illustrations of these ideas; also set down the conclusion he comes to. Give your whole mind to his *thought*; if you try to take down his exact words, you will be lost. As soon after the speech as you have the time, write out in clear and connected language your report of the speech, filling in the proofs and illustrations as you remember them. Your final record (written for your town or city paper, say) may run to two or three hundred words, and should contain the substance of the speaker's remarks.

The notes you take while you are listening to a speech may be utterly unintelligible to any one but yourself; nevertheless, they will serve your purpose well enough if they help you to recall at the proper time the substance of what the speaker has said. They may even be as crude as these: —

HINTS ON SPEECH-MAKING

Have something to say — something that *must* be said. Illustrations: Kinglake — men in legislature — town meetings — speeches that command most attention.

Always speak in a natural key—in a conversational manner. Illustrations: A Harvard dinner—device for getting easy tone—naturalness—boy sent to dancing-school—Tennyson quoted—remark to neighbor at table.

Never carry a scrap of paper before an audience. Illustrations: etc., etc.¹

4. Take notes of some story or anecdote, if you are fortunate enough to hear a good one well told, and then write out your own version of it, not hesitating to improve upon the telling of the story—always keeping the truth and point of the narrative, however. Keep this practice up for a year or two, and you may become a good storyteller, an accomplishment that will bring profit to yourself and amusement to others. Our great Lincoln was a capital story-teller.

5. Bring your history and laboratory note-books to class (it is supposed that the teacher of composition has charge of the literature note-books), and talk over with your teacher the advisability of improving them in form and in clear and adequate expression. Remember that the records in these books, which are not intended for mere temporary use, should be made in your choicest language; you should use no “catch-words” and fragments of sentences here.

SECTION 5

How to Gather Material

1. BY SEEING

After you have selected your subject, and after you have properly limited and worded it, you should examine

¹ You will find the essay from which these notes are taken in that admirable little book by Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Hints on Writing and Speech-Making*.

the contents of your mind, pretty much as a boy examines the contents of his pockets, to see what you have to give in trade for the interest of the reader. It may be that you will find as much of a jumble in your mind as the boy does in his pockets, but nevertheless keep thinking away at your subject, and, if you have chosen the right sort of subject, your ideas will soon begin to take definite shape, and the memories you had long ago stored up, and perhaps never since revived, will crowd pell-mell upon each other in their demand for expression, and your pencil will fall far behind in its race to keep abreast of your thoughts. The thoughts that come to you in this way are your best material, the material most easily found also, and the more you use of these first thoughts the more other people will be interested in what you write.

If, on the other hand, you have chosen a subject about which you have little first-hand knowledge, or if, as it sometimes happens, a subject has been assigned you about which you know nothing whatever, you will have to gather up what material you can find by one or all of three methods,—by seeing, by reading, and by thinking (that is, by thinking over the material you have gathered).

In gathering material by seeing, there are two rules to know and to practise: (1) Keep your eyes open to see things, and (2) keep your eyes on the things you see until you know what they are. These rules are easy enough to remember, but difficult indeed to practise. It is a curious fact that many people live their lives through without seeing things, and that most people live their lives through without seeing things well enough to know what they are.

The successful people, in every walk of life, are those who see things and see them well; the unsuccessful people are those who see not at all, or see not well. To write well you must see things and see them well, because you can never in your writing, or in your talking, for that matter, make others see vividly what you yourself have not seen vividly.

There are not in the whole world two grains of sand, two insects, two hands, or two noses that are precisely alike. In the smallest thing there is a grain of the unknown. You do not know what a thing is until you have looked at it long enough, and with attention close enough, to discover this unknown part of it, to discover just how it differs from every other thing that seems to be like it. In order to describe a fire or a tree, therefore, you must remain face to face with that fire or that tree until for you they no longer resemble any other tree or any other fire.¹ You will then know what that fire is, and what that tree is, and you will then be ready to try to describe them in such a way that your readers will not confound them with any other tree or any other fire.

Exercise 12

1. The following questions will test your present power of seeing things, and perhaps reveal the need of practising the rules laid down in Section 5. The questions refer to

¹ These thoughts are taken from the Introduction to a French book, Guy de Maupassant's *Pierre et Jean*. Maupassant there tells how his master, Flaubert, taught him to write, and his account contains about all there is that is really worth knowing about the art of writing. Flaubert's theory may be extreme, but although no one can hope quite to attain to Flaubert's idea, it is nevertheless a good idea to have ever in mind.



some very ordinary things, such as you may have seen, *and yet not have seen*, a hundred times or more. Try to answer them off-hand.

1. How does a cat lie down?
2. How does a dog lie down?
3. How does a horse get up?
4. How does a cow drink?
5. How does a duck eat?
6. When does the maple leave out in spring?
7. How does a locomotive take a curve?
8. How does a passenger train stop? When do the wheels cease revolving?
9. What is the difference in color between a wasp and a bumble-bee?
10. How many of your friends polish the heels of their shoes?

2. Now that you have tried to answer off-hand the test questions in 1, choose the one that most interests you, do what seeing is needed, and write a paragraph in which you give a clear and detailed answer to it.

Exercise 13

Look at some object until you see clearly just how it differs from every other object that seems to be like it, and then write a short paragraph in which you describe it so clearly that no one would be likely to confound it with similar things. Take a tree, a building, a face, some person's eyes, a bend of the river, a bird, a flower — anything you please.

Exercise 14

THE SNOW-STORM¹

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

¹ The selections in this book by Emerson, Hawthorne, and Lowell used by permission of, and special arrangement with, Messrs. Houghton Mifflin & Co., the authorized publishers of the works of those authors.

HELPS TO STUDY: This poem is put here to help you understand what is said in Section 6. (1) Read the poem once or twice to get the story; (2) read the poem again to make sure that you know the meaning of every word in it—look up in a dictionary those words whose meanings you do not know (on one occasion Lincoln walked twenty miles to find out the meaning of a word); (3) read the poem once more very, very slowly, and try to make, in your mind, a picture of each detail in the description—thus: “Announced by all the trumpets of the sky, Arrives the snow” (stop here, and make some sort of mental picture of this, *and make it clear*, before you read what follows)—“and, driving o’er the fields, Seems nowhere to alight” (put this into your picture)—“the whited air Hides hills and woods” (stop again)—and so on to the end of the poem; (4) now that you understand the poem, read it again, this time aloud, and take as much delight in it as you can. If you have the time, you may like to compare this poem with Bryant’s “The First Snow-Shower,” Whittier’s “Snow-Bound,” Lowell’s winter in “The Vision of Sir Launfal,” or any other description of a snow-storm that you have read.

SECTION 6

How to Gather Material

2. BY READING

Your study of Emerson’s poem has shown you that seeing and thinking are to be carried over into reading. Seeing, reading, and thinking, each one is an aid to the other two: you should see, in order that you may read; you should read, in order that you may see; and you should think, in order that you may both see and read. You should read with the same spirit that the child plays; that is, become so absorbed in exercising your powers of seeing and thinking upon the book you are reading that you lose yourself in your occupation. When you were

making mind pictures of the details in Emerson's description of the snow-storm, you were using your powers of seeing and thinking in your reading. Burke had in mind this use of thought in reading, when he said that much reading is good, but that "the power of diversifying the matter infinitely in your own mind, and of applying it to every occasion that arises, is far better."¹ Emerson had it in mind, when he said that "one must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, 'He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies.' . . . When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of the author is as broad as the world."²

It is this sort of reading that will save you from thoughtless reading, and from the mental dissipation and decay that follow from thoughtless reading. It is this sort of reading that will help you to mental independence, — individuality, originality, or whatever you choose to call it, — which is so much dwelt upon in this book. Remember that it is easy to abuse the sacred privilege of books, and if you can be nothing but a child, tossed hither and thither, and swept about by every wind of opinion, you had better never look inside a book.

Not all your reading, it is true, can be done in this careful manner, both because you have not always the time for this letter by letter reading, and because the vast majority of books would not repay it; but it is not therefore true that you should ever sacrifice your mental independence

¹ Quoted by Genung, *Practical Rhetoric*, 235-236.

² *The American Scholar*.

to books. The wise Bacon, in his essay *Of Studies*, says, "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention." The reference books you consult in gathering material for a theme are to be tasted—to be read only in parts; the magazines and most of the books you read merely for pleasure or for information are to be swallowed—to be read, but not curiously (carefully); the English and American classics set for study in your course of study, if well chosen, are to be chewed and digested—to be read wholly (studied), and with diligence and attention. In making notes of what you read you will find it well always to digest the thought, even when you merely "taste" books, and to state that thought in your own words, copying only what you think you may quote. In copying it is no more than common honesty to put within quotation marks that which you copy, and in quoting it is well to give the name of the author, the title of the work, and the volume, chapter, page, or whatever in each case will most precisely locate the passage quoted.

Exercise 15

1. Take the last theme you wrote, and set down in note form on a separate sheet of paper the thoughts you know were your own. On another sheet set down in the same manner the thoughts you got from some book, indicating, if you can, the particular source of each important thought. The purpose of this exercise is to show you the extent to which you depended on books for the material of your theme.

2. Select one of the following articles, or one that your teacher assigns you instead, and take notes : —

"A Day's Work on a Snow-Plough," H. H. Lewis, *The World's Work*, January, 1901; "Fifty Cents a Week at Harvard," John Hechtor, *Success*, July, 1901; "Migration to the Canadian Northwest," Cy Warman, *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, September, 1902; "How to Judge a Horse," E. A. A. Grange, *The Cosmopolitan*, January, 1901; "How to Have Fun at a Picnic," Dan Beard, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, July, 1900; "A Boys' Stag Party," Dan Beard, *ibid.*, March, 1900; "A Panorama Party," Dan Beard, *ibid.*, February, 1900; a dozen or more articles similar to the last three, by Dan Beard, will be found in *The Ladies' Home Journal* for 1899-1900, beginning with June, 1899; "A Trained Colonial Civil Service," E. G. Bourne, *North American Review*, October, 1899; "Our Government of Newly Acquired Territory," Carl Evans Boyd, *The Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1898; "A Junior Republic and Its Lesson," Robert Gray, *Success*, August, 1901; "What They Do at Vassar," Mary MacColl, *ibid.*, September, 1901; "A Girl's College Life," Lavinia Hart, *The Cosmopolitan*, June, 1901; "The Art of Seeing Things," John Burroughs, *The Century Magazine*, December, 1899.

In taking notes of what you read, you should go at your work rather more deliberately, and make your notes somewhat fuller than you do when you take notes of what you hear. (1) Read the article through to get some notion of what it is about; (2) give it a second reading, and this time take your notes; (3) take no more notes than you need for the purpose in hand, and state them in your own words. If you copy the author's words put them within quotation marks. Here are some notes from an interesting article by Dan Beard in *The Ladies' Home Journal* for September, 1900 : —

HOW TO MAKE AN ATTIC GYMNASIUM

The attic is a good place for a home gymnasium; will give enjoyment on rainy days.

Things needed to furnish gymnasium : —

1. Parallel bars. Make the bars of straight-grained pine, strong enough to support body at full swing. Support bars by two uprights nailed to rafters and toe-nailed to floor, or steady with braces. Gauge space between bars by experimenting with chairs.

2. Punching bag. Make frame for same of 2 x 4 pieces, and nail to rafters overhead. Use light lumber on platform, and suspend ball by line running through hole in centre of platform.

3. Chinning bar. Nail two 2 x 4 pieces to rafters and floor; through these pieces bore several sets of holes to receive at convenient heights a strong, rounded bar of wood.

4. Weight machines. To the wall nail a board as high as your shoulder. Fasten block to top of board, and attach pulley to block. Make weight of bag filled with shot or pebbles, and use a wood block for a top, to which block attach another pulley. "From a screw-eye under the block, at the top of the board, run a piece of window-sash cord through the pulley on the weight, up to and through the pulley at the top of the board, and thence to a wooden handle." Make two such machines, one for each hand.

5. Wrist machine. [Notes omitted for lack of space.]

6. Weights of any shape, if not too heavy, will do for dumb-bells and Indian clubs.

7. A light wooden chair, grasped by back or rungs, will afford good exercise and many pretty evolutions.

8. A smooth floor will permit of practice in walking on the hands.

9. An old mattress is handy for falls.

3. Make a list of five or more subjects on which you can find a good deal of material in the most recent issues of the newspapers and magazines. Underscore those you would like to write about.

4. From the following list of subjects select two that you would like to know more about than you now know, and for each subject make out a list of references to books and periodicals in which material on it can be found. To do this work you had better consult some list of reference works, as well as the catalogue of your public library, to

see what books and periodicals are accessible, and then examine them carefully enough to find the needed references. You ought to know the books that are accessible for reference in your school, town, or city library, and the particular merits of the most important; the use of the card catalogue, if your public library has a card catalogue; the use of the index and table of contents in a book; and, in general, anything that will emphasize the time-saving importance of knowing before starting for a library just what to look for, and of becoming well enough acquainted with books of reference to know on reaching a library just where to look for the thing wanted. Read Koopman's *Mastery of Books*, especially pages 48-62, which treat of reference books and catalogues.

1. How marbles are made.
2. The origin of Thanksgiving.
3. The boyhood of Daniel Webster.
4. The goldenrod.
5. The White House.
6. The habits of the Eskimos.
7. How birds pass the night.
8. Some things the fox does.

5. Write a connected paragraph on one of the subjects you worked on in 4.

SECTION 7

How to Gather Material

3. BY THINKING

At the beginning of Section 5 something was said about thinking, but the thinking there referred to had to do mainly with the finding and setting down of the thoughts that come to you just after you have chosen, limited, and

worded your subject, and before you have searched for material elsewhere than in your own mind; the material here referred to has to do rather with the material you have gathered by some other process,—by seeing, or by reading, for instance. It means the turning of such material over and over in your mind until you have thought all the vagueness out of it, and, by this means, the adding of new material, which in reality is your own thought, to what you have already gathered. This process, it is true, is going on all the while you are gathering material by whatever means is within your power, and all the while it is adding to and changing the material you are gathering; but the process must be applied by itself after you have finished gathering material by other means. Thinking the vagueness out of your material is not always an easy task, but it is none the less an essential task. You are not ready to write until you have looked through and through your material, and by continuous thought have made it quite your own. Keep it in your mind as long as you can before writing, brood upon it, try to see something new in it; construct your theme in your thought before you set it down on paper.

Exercise 16

Take some material you have already gathered, and think it over, applying as best you can the method outlined in Section 7. Set down in note form the new thoughts that occur to you, and set them down the moment they occur to you, no matter where you may be. Keep the material in your mind for three or four days,—the longer, the better,—using your spare moments to think it over. Five or ten minutes spent in steady thinking, at several different periods of the day when your mind is fresh, will insure good results.

Exercise 17

MY FIRST ENTRY INTO PHILADELPHIA

BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city,¹ that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings² with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with travelling, rowing, and want of rest; I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of the boat for my passage, who at first refused it, on account of my rowing; but I insisted on their taking it. A man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty, perhaps through fear of being thought to have but little.

Then I walked up the street, gazing about till near the market-house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Second Street, and asked for biscuit, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a threepenny loaf, and was told they had none such. So, not considering or knowing the difference of money, and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I bade him give me threepenny-worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surprised at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walked off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market Street as far as Fourth Street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chestnut Street and part of Walnut Street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market Street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the

¹ Philadelphia.² This was in October, 1723.

other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round a while and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continued so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

HELPS TO STUDY: This story is a part of Franklin's *Autobiography*, one of the best books of its kind ever written. (1) Read the story several times, pretty much as you did Emerson's poem several pages back. (2) Make a list of the details in the story. (3) Omit one of the details in your list (*e.g.* "my best clothes being to come round by sea"), read the story without this detail, and note the effect. How, then, does this detail help to tell the story? What is its use? Omit one or two more details, and again read the story, noting the effect of the omission. In this fashion go through the whole story. (4) Now try to think of some detail that Franklin might have put into his story, but did not. Put it in, read the story, and note the effect. Do the same thing with other details. (5) What lesson does this study of the story teach you?

SECTION 8

How to Select Material

Your study of Franklin's story, I fancy, has brought you to at least two conclusions: first, that Franklin put no details into his story which could have been omitted without a real loss to it; second, that he omitted a great many details which, if put into his story, would only have marred the telling of it. That is, he told the story just as you think he ought to have told it; he told neither too little nor too much. Just how did he do this?

Not without taking thought, you may be sure, and, quite likely, not before he had told his story several times over. Every detail is there because it ought to be there, and every detail is in its proper place. The building has been put up with care and labor, because every stone is in its place. But why did he not tell us more? Why did he not put more stones into the building? He walked up one of the streets, but why did he not tell us how the street was paved, if paved at all, and how its buildings looked? He met a boy with bread, but why did he not tell how the boy was dressed? He had made many a meal on bread, but why did he not tell us when and where? He went to buy biscuit, but why did he not describe the baker and his shop? He passed the house of his future father-in-law, and saw his future wife standing in the doorway, but why did he not satisfy our curiosity as to the appearance of Miss Read and her home? He gave bread to a poor woman and her child, but why did he not tell us more about them? Evidently, because he thought that none of these things, for the purpose he then had in hand, really needed to be told. These thoughts, and many more beside, we may not doubt, passed through his mind as he began to relate his narrative, but he knew very well that the telling of them would ruin his account outright. Therefore, he chose rather to select his material, and to use only such parts of it as would go to the making of a well-told story. He put aside the stones that were not needed for his building.

Now hear our good Mistress Quickly answer Sir John Falstaff's question, "What is the gross sum that I owe thee?"

Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson¹ week, when the prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor, thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then and call me gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound! And didst thou not, when she was gone down stairs, desire me to be no more so familiarity with such poor people; saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath: deny it, if thou canst.—2 *Henry IV*, Act II, scene i, lines 92–112.

Precious little did our gossiping hostess know about the selection of material!

The lesson to be learned here is this: Say no more than needs to be said, and yet say all that needs to be said; in other words, go carefully through the material you have gathered, which must always be greater than your needs, select and use what will well serve your present purpose, and no more. Two questions will help you to make this selection: (1) "Is there any detail in my material which is not needed for my present purpose?" (2) "Is any detail needed which is not now in my material?" As you go on you will learn several principles that will help you to make answer to these questions. In the meantime, a narrow and definite subject, worded to show your purpose in writing, will help you as much as anything else in selecting your material; there is nothing more likely to lead you astray than to try to write about something of everything.

¹ Whitsun; see the dictionary, *s.v.*, Whitsunday.

Exercise 18

1. Study the following fable, omitting and adding details, in the same manner that you studied Franklin's story in Exercise 17: —

THE BAT, THE BIRDS, AND THE BEASTS

A great conflict was about to come off between the Birds and the Beasts. When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join. The Birds that passed his perch said, "Come with us;" but he said, "I am a Beast." Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said, "Come with us;" but he said, "I am a Bird." Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the Beasts, but had soon to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. "Ah," said the Bat, "I see now,

He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends."¹

2. Find some anecdote, or narrative paragraph, in this book, and study it in the same manner as in 1. If you can find a good anecdote in some other book, bring it to class, and be prepared to study it in the same way.

3. In the following list, what details are not needed to develop the subject, as stated at the head of the list?

HOW WE EAT AND SLEEP IN A LUMBER CAMP

Camp located far up the mountains.

The life is healthful.

We work from starlight to starlight.

No settlement within many miles.

Our appetites are ravenous.

¹ Compare the Arabic proverb about the ostrich: "They said to the camel-bird, 'Fly'; it said, 'I am a beast'; they said, 'Carry'; it said, 'I am a bird.'"

We sleep deeply at night in closely crowded beds.

Our food, though plain, is well cooked.

It is autumn.

We breathe the keen mountain air.

In the cabin-loft, where we sleep, there are gaping chinks between the logs.

We sometimes eat at camp, and sometimes where we are at work on the mountain side among the newly stripped logs.

Wind and snow enter our loft at will.

The air out of doors is fragrant with pine and hemlock.

4. What details are missing from the following list?

IN A TENT ON A RAINY NIGHT

The wind shakes the tent-flaps.

The rain patters on the canvas close to your head.

The storm outside increases.

A little trench dug around the tent carries off the water.

SECTION 9

How to Arrange Material

Let us suppose, rather too obviously perhaps, that Franklin had begun the story of his entry into Philadelphia in this fashion:—

The first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia, was the great meeting-house of the Quakers. In this house I fell fast asleep, being very drowsy through labor and want of rest the preceding night. But before I fell asleep I sat down among the people in the meeting-house, and looked around a while and heard nothing said. Before this, however, I came into the house with many clean-dressed people, whom I saw all walking the same way in the street.

But before I saw these people in the street I came from a boat on the river, where I gave a woman and her child two rolls of bread. But before that, etc., etc.

Clearly, such an order would never do. It is precisely the order that is made into fun in these nonsense verses in *The House that Jack Built*: —

This is the farmer sowing his corn,
That kept the cock that crowed in the morn,
That waked the priest all shaven and shorn,
That married the man all tattered and torn,
That kissed the maiden all forlorn,
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn,
That tossed the dog,
That worried the cat,
That killed the rat,
That ate the malt
That lay in the house that Jack built.

It is not enough, then, merely to select your material, even though you do it ever so wisely—you have also to arrange it in some natural order. No one will listen to you if you tell your stories backward, or if you tell them in the haphazard way in which their details first occur to you. The mind sometimes works pretty much as a drunken man walks. You will find, as you go on in this book, that every kind of writing has, for each effect to be produced, some one best order, and that you must arrange the details in your material in that order if you are to impress your readers forcibly by what you write. Thus, in telling a story, it is generally¹ best to follow the order of time, giving each detail in the order in which it happens.

A good way to get order into material is to prepare an outline. In an outline you set down the most important details in your material, or headings, as they are sometimes called, and then you group under these headings the less

¹ "Generally," but not always. See Chapter VI.

important details, or subheadings, in such manner that those details that are near in thought stand near in place also. The most convenient way to do this is to write each heading and subheading on a separate slip of paper—cards, if you have them, are better than slips of paper for this work—in what seems to you to be the natural order. Then study and sort these slips or cards until you are satisfied that you cannot better the order, when you may write your outline on a single sheet of paper. In this manner you can make any number of fresh plans, without having each time to write every new one afresh.¹

Exercise 19

1. CLASS EXERCISE: Select some subject with which nearly all the class are familiar, and write on the blackboard the headings and subheadings as they are suggested by the various members of the class. Accept none but good suggestions, and when enough of these have been recorded, ask your students to transfer to separate slips of paper, which they have brought to class for this purpose, all those headings and subheadings on the blackboard which they think they can use in making an outline. These slips of paper are then to be rearranged, according to the method described in Section 9, and the outline that results from the rearrangement, with the necessary changes in wording, is to be written on such paper as is required for the written work of the course.

The following notes and outline were made by a high school student. She was asked to record the various headings written on her slips of paper in such a way as to show

¹ I am indebted to Professor Barrett Wendell for this suggestion; see his *English Composition*, 164–166.

the order before and after rearrangement, and from these headings to make an outline:—

Headings written on slips of paper, in their first order [Title: A Girls' Chestnut Party]: 1. What to take. 2. Baskets with lunch; baskets when empty to be filled with nuts. 3. Bags to hold nuts. 4. Where to eat the nutting-dinner. 5. How to hull the chestnuts. 6. Gloves to gather the nuts with. 7. Roasting and boiling the chestnuts. 8. The leader of the party—The Little Brown Squirrel. 9. Her badge—fall leaves, or nuts tied together with brown ribbon. 10. How the leader is chosen. 11. What the leader does when chosen. 12. Paper plates and napkins. 13. Large sheets of white paper for table-cloth.

Order after final rearrangement: 1, 2, 3, 6; 4, 13, 12; 5, 8, 10, 11, 9; 7.

The outline:—

A GIRLS' CHESTNUT PARTY

I. What to take.

1. Baskets with lunch; baskets when empty to be filled with nuts.
2. Bags to hold nuts.
3. Gloves to gather nuts with.

II. The nutting-dinner.

1. To be eaten near spring.
2. Large sheets of white paper for table-cloth.
3. Paper plates and napkins.

III. Hulling the chestnuts.

IV. The Little Brown Squirrel (the name of the leader).

1. How she is chosen (the one who gathers the most nuts).
2. What she does when chosen.
 - a. She commands the rest of the party.
 - b. She decides all disputes.

v. The evening at home (the home of The Little Brown Squirrel).

1. Roasting and boiling the chestnuts.
2. Playing games.

a. Three luggies.	d. The ghostly fire.
b. Bobbing for apples.	e. Other games.
c. The apple and candle game.	

2. Supply subheadings to complete the following outlines:—

THE SCHOOL DEBATING SOCIETY

- I. Its merits.
- II. Its faults.
- III. Its possible improvements.

LEARNING TO SWIM

- I. Importance of knowing how to swim.
- II. Movements in swimming.
- III. Floating.
- IV. Diving.
- V. Breathing.

NOTE.—The Girls' Club, The School Theatrical, The School Athletic Organization, or any other similar subject may be substituted for the School Debating Society. The same main headings may be used with any of the subjects named.

3. Arrange the details in Exercise 18 (3) in what seems to you to be the best order. Add whatever headings are needed to make your outline complete.

4. Bring to the class your favorite short story, and explain how the author has arranged his material. To do this work as it should be done, you will need to make an outline of the story, or, if the story is rather long, of some well-told incident in it.

5. Write short hints of the details of the following story, similar to those in Exercise 18 (3 and 4),—write each hint on a separate piece of paper,—jumble your slips into confusion, and lay them aside for two or three weeks. At the end of the second or third week, when you have pretty well forgotten the story, study your slips, arrange them in the best order you can think of, and write the story in your own words. When you have

rewritten your version enough times to satisfy yourself that you cannot better it, compare your story with the original. This may show you some of your faults, which you can then correct. Franklin rewrote parts of *The Spectator* in this manner, and in this, and similar ways, he acquired a clear, simple, and forcible style; read his account of the matter near the beginning of his *Autobiography*.

HOW JOSEPH WAS SOLD INTO SLAVERY

And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colors that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, "What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: . . . And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said, "This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." And he knew it, and said, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. — *Genesis*, chapter xxxvii, verses 23-28, 31-34.

6. CLASS EXERCISE: Make mimeograph copies of an outline written by some member of the class that is worth revising, hand a copy to each student, and require a short and definite written criticism to be made of it during the

recitation hour, together with a revised form of the outline itself. At the next recitation have two or three of these criticisms read and discussed, and have as many more of the revised outlines placed upon the blackboard for discussion. If a mimeograph is not to be had, write the first outline also on the blackboard.

Exercise 20

AN ICE-QUAKE¹

BY WALTER WELLMAN

. . . March 22d was a day of storm from the northeast, and we could not make the dogs face the blast. By evening the wind had died away, but as the nights were still pretty dark, we crept into our sleeping-bags at six o'clock, with orders for breakfast at three in the morning and an early start. At midnight we were roused by the ominous sound of ice crashing against ice, accompanied by a slight jarring of the frozen crust which lay between us and the sea. In an instant all five of us were outside the tent. We could see nothing. The storm had blown up again, and the air was filled with drifting snow. Two men were detailed to make a reconnaissance, the others creeping back into the tent out of the blast. But in two or three seconds there came another movement of the ice; another low, sullen, rumbling sound.

A crack had opened directly under our sleeping-bags, and in its black depths we could hear the waters rushing and seething. Running out of the tent into the darkness, one of us stepped into an opening, wetting his foot, and no sooner had he withdrawn his leg than the crack closed like a vise, and with such force that the edges of the blocks were ground to fragments, and the *debris* was pushed up into a quivering ridge. Ten feet away lay a dog with his head cut clean off by a similar opening and closing of the ice upon which he had been sleeping. How the animal had managed to get caught in the trap we could not imagine; but there he was, as neatly beheaded as if an executioner had done the job. The remaining dogs were howling dolefully. Some

¹ Copyright, March, 1900, by the S. S. McClure Company, courtesy *McClure's Magazine*.

of our sledges, with their precious stores, were already toppling into the waters where the ice had upheaved underneath them. Under our feet and all around us the ice was shaking and breaking—here pushing up, there sinking down—and the violently agitated sea was spouting through the openings. We were caught in an ice-quake.

For a few moments, oddly enough, we did not fully realize our danger. To none of us was an ice-pressure a new thing, and familiarity had doubtless bred in us, if not contempt for the ice-king, certainly a somewhat superfluous confidence in ourselves. But when, a few moments later, the very pieces of ice upon which we stood reared up and assumed angles of from thirty to forty-five degrees; when our entire camp started revolving as if it were in a maelstrom; when we saw our tent, sleeping-bags, and cooking-kit threatened with destruction by a rushing mass of sludge and water, we knew that whatever was to be done must be done right quickly. There was no panic. There was not the slightest sign that any of us was even excited. We cut the harnesses of such dogs as we could get at, that they might save themselves. In the very nick of time three of us sprang out upon the floe which held our tent, tilted though it was with one edge down in the boiling sea and the other up in the air; and after a sharp struggle, we succeeded in rescuing the precious sleeping-bags, the cooking-outfit, and the tent itself.

Obviously it was imperative that we run away from this convulsed spot as quickly as possible. But whither should we go? In the darkness and storm it was impossible to see anything around us but the shaking, quaking ice-blocks. I asked Paul and Emil to go hunt a sound floe, if such a thing remained in the Arctic seas, upon which we could take refuge. They instantly set out, scrambling over the rolling, shaking slabs, and as they disappeared in the gloom I said to myself, "Well, that's the last I shall ever see of those boys." Yet I was not much concerned about it. For some reason, which I never expect to understand, I was unable to get up more than a sort of indifferent interest in what was going on. The most acute sensation I had was in a thought of how much more pleasant it would be back in the snug bag, and whether it was really worth while to stay out in this bitter wind trying to save things.

In a few moments Paul and Emil returned with the word that twenty or thirty rods away they had found a floe which appeared to be sound

and safe. Then, for the first time, we all began to feel that there was something worth hurrying for. Laying hold of a sledge, we hastened with it over the quaking pieces and across a chasm in which the water was running like a mill-race, to a place of safety upon the large floe beyond. Three trips there and back we made, each time finding the chasm considerably wider than before. It was all we could do to get the third sledge over, and when we attempted to return for the fourth there was before us a river — a mad-rushing, ice-strewn current. The spot where our camp had stood, and where but a few moments before we had all been at the work of rescue, was in a volcanic state of eruption. Masses of ice were gushing up into the air like flames. The brittle blocks were crushing, grinding, snarling, biting at one another. The sea was rushing wildly through and over the *débris*. From within this swirling maelstrom of ice and water came the doleful howling of a number of dogs whose fastenings we had been unable to cut. We stood at the margin of the upheaval and listened. The volume of cry from the dogs became fainter and fainter. Soon it dwindled to the moan of a single dog. A second more, and there was no sound to be heard save the cracking, crunching of the ice, the swishing, hissing of the waters. As I stood there in the storm by the wreck of a great hope I noticed how strangely like the roar of a fierce conflagration were the mutterings of this polar paroxysm. — *McClure's Magazine*, 14: 405-406.

Read the above selection carefully, and then make an outline of one or two paragraphs. You may also use this selection to illustrate the arrangement of material.

SECTION 10

How to Write a Theme

The ultimate thing to do with your material is to use it. This is the end, and a pleasurable one it should be, of all your labors of preparation. When you have thought through and through your material, when you have turned it over and over in your mind, when you have looked at

it from all possible directions, when you have made it really your own, when you can write at least a paragraph at a time without the use of notes, you are at last ready to make the first rough draft of your theme. This first draft should be made with all possible swiftness, and with as little attention as possible to legibility, to punctuation and to spelling, to the choice of words and to the construction of sentences. Write for once as if there were no "rules" in the whole wide world. Make your pencil fly. If the proper word does not occur to you, put in a dash, and go on, never stopping to take breath until you have reached the end of your theme. Fix your mind's eye on the thought, as you would fix your eye on a goal, and write as if you were running a race.

When you have finished the first rough draft of your theme, go over your work very slowly, criticising it as severely as you know how. You may find your work so faulty that you will be thoroughly ashamed of it, but do not be discouraged. Be discouraged only when you find no faults to correct. The race now is for the slow. The punctuation and the spelling, the wording, the phrasing, and the sentence structure, all will need most careful working over. If you have written too much, cut out what can best be spared. If you have left out some important thought, put it in where it belongs. Add a word here, change a word there, leave out part of this sentence, rewrite the next sentence eight or ten times, and so on through your theme. Copy what you have written, read it aloud, and, if you are not yet satisfied with it, give your theme as many more revisions as you think it needs. Do not leave off working on your theme until it is as near perfection as it is within your power to bring it.

Exercise 21

CLASS EXERCISE: Let the class choose by vote some one of the subjects on pages 44-45. Then apply to the subject chosen each of the processes thus far taught and practised. (1) Limit the subject, (2) word the subject, (3) set down first thoughts on it, (4) gather material on it by seeing, (5) gather material on it by reading, (6) gather material on it by thinking,¹ (7) select the material to be used, (8) arrange it by means of an outline, (9) make without notes a first rough draft of the theme, (10) revise it and rewrite it, and finally (11) write out the finished theme. With the possible exception of (4) and (5), this work should be done in class, and each process should be thoroughly talked over and discussed in class. Moreover, the results of each process should be kept separate, and, when all the work is done, neatly copied on separate sheets of paper, and preserved for future reference. The exercise will consume several recitation periods.

The object of this exercise is to teach the use and importance of a good method in writing. The method here put into practice, which has been developed step by step in the preceding ten sections of this book, and practised step by step by the student, is the only natural method there is for the writing of a single essay of any sort, and, therefore, the only natural method there is for the writing of any number of essays. It is the method which pretty nearly every writer comes to use more or less instinctively in actual composition. Some step in the method, it is true, may, in some particular theme or essay, be omitted,

¹ In (3), (4), (5), and (6) insist on the use of the knowledge gained in Section 4 and the accompanying exercises.

or taken so easily that the writer is scarcely conscious of having taken it, but, as a general thing, each step is taken, and taken in precisely the order revealed in this book, in pretty nearly every essay that is written. This method, once thoroughly learned, will be an invaluable aid in the future work of this course ; it is intended that it shall be used in every bit of writing, of the length of a paragraph or more, which the student does. By the time the entire course is finished, the method will thus have grown into a habit.

Here are the subjects : —

1. The legend of the *Flying Dutchman*.
2. A basket of apples (from blossom to ripened fruit; a story about).
3. The treasures of the hills, (a) above ground; (b) beneath.
4. Some character in fiction (Isaac of York? See *Ivanhoe*; for other noted Jews in fiction, see *The Merchant of Venice*, Ware's *Zenobia*, Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, Lessing's *Nathan the Wise*, Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*. This subject is for advanced students and teachers, at least the part of it that involves comparisons).
5. How I spent my last vacation.
6. A store window at Christmas time.
7. The autobiography of a dime (from mine to mint; from mint to pocket).
8. The lesson of *The Ancient Mariner*. (See notes and references in my edition of the poem, published by the Macmillan Company. The edition contains an extended list of subjects for composition, any of which may be taken instead of the present one.)
9. Monday is more desirable as a holiday than Saturday.
10. Counting-out rhymes, and the games they are used for (e.g.:

One-ry, or-ry, hickery han,
Fillison, follison, Nicholas, John,
Queevy, quavy, English Navy,
Stingelum, stangelum, berry buck !

For more of the same sort see D. C. Beard's *The Outdoor Handy*

Book. Any phase of the subject that suggests itself may be worked up).

11. A visit to a watch factory (or to some other place of interest in your vicinity).

12. Newspaper advertisements (Outline: I. Advertisements that I like. 1. Those that are attractive in form. 2. Those that are attractive because of the thing advertised. II. Advertisements that I do not like. 1. Those that are commonplace. 2. Those that are untrue or inconsistent. 3. Those that irritate me. III. My ideal. 1. The picture. 2. The words. "Magazine advertisements" will be an interesting substitute for those who have learned to read their magazines backwards).

SECTION 11

How to Name a Theme

Every theme must have a name. This name is called the title. The title of a theme has been aptly compared to the label the druggist puts on a bottle to show what it contains. Just as the label enables the druggist to know the contents of a bottle, so the title enables the reader to know the contents of what he is asked to read. The selection of a subject is the first thing done in the writing of a theme, while the choosing of a title is the last. The subject is of chief importance, and dictates what material shall and shall not be used, while the title is only an after-thought calling attention in the briefest way to what has been written. If your subject has been "An attempt by one of the players to explain the first football defeat of the season to a young lady who does not understand football," your title may be nothing more than *Our First Football Defeat*; if you have written a theme giving "Directions for finding a fine trout stream I know, written for a friend whom I cannot accompany to the spot," you may be content to name it *The Way to the Trout Stream*.

(2) An hour spent in waiting for a train at a country railway station.

(3) A description of the Van Tassel homestead.

5. Search the recent numbers of the popular magazines, and select five titles of short stories ; five of essays ; five of poems ; five of any sort you think are specially good.

6. Examine the titles in the catalogue of some publisher (you ought to own the catalogues of the most prominent American publishers—a postal will bring any one of them), and make a list of some fifteen or twenty that seem particularly attractive. Do you find any titles you cannot understand? Any very clear titles? Any fanciful titles?

7. Make a list of the novels of one of the following authors : Jane Austen, Scott, Cooper, Frederick Marryat, Bulwer-Lytton, Dickens, Thackeray, Charles Kingsley, George Eliot, W. D. Howells, Mrs. Humphry Ward, F. Marion Crawford, Thomas Hardy, Stevenson, Kipling. What do you learn from the titles in your list?

8. Suggest other titles for some five of the selections that are quoted in this book.

9. Suggest other titles for at least two of the following poems : —

Bryant's "Thanatopsis," "To a Water-Fowl"; Drake's "American Flag"; Halleck's "Marco Bozzaris"; Emerson's "Concord Hymn," "The Humblebee"; Longfellow's "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Discoverer of the North Cape," "King Robert of Sicily," "The Old Clock on the Stairs," "The Birds of Killingworth"; Whittier's "Angels of Buena Vista," "Maud Muller," "Barefoot Boy," "Skipper Ireson's Ride," "Ichabod"; Poe's "The Haunted Palace," "Annabel Lee," "The Raven"; Holmes's "The Chambered Nautilus," "The Last Leaf," "Old Ironsides"; Lowell's "Hebe," "To the Dandelion," "She Came and Went," "The Courtin'"; Taylor's "Bedouin Song";

Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain"; Bret Harte's "Chicago"; Stoddard's "Abraham Lincoln"; J. Miller's "Columbus."

10. Make a list of the titles of the chapters in some recent novel; *e.g.* in Ford's *Janice Meredith*, Johnston's *To Have and to Hold*, Pidgin's *Quincy Adams Sawyer*, Churchill's *Richard Carvel* and *The Crisis*, Thompson's *Alice of Old Vincennes*, and the like.

Exercise 23

Read the following selections, and then suggest an appropriate and attractive title for each : —

An abbot, a man of wit, and skilled in the construction of new musical instruments, was ordered by Louis XI, King of France, more in jest than in earnest, to procure him a concert of swines' voices. The abbot said that the thing could doubtless be done, but that it would take a good deal of money. The king ordered that he should have whatever he required for the purpose. The abbot then wrought a thing as singular as ever was seen; for out of a great number of hogs of several ages which he got together, and placed under a tent, or pavilion, covered with velvet, before which he had a table of wood painted, with a certain number of keys, he made an organical instrument, and as he played upon the said keys with little spikes, which pricked the hogs, he made them cry in such order and consonance, he highly delighted the king and all his company. — *A Hundred Anecdotes of Animals* (published by John Lane), 90.

"Are you afraid, Monsieur Beverley?" she demanded after a short waiting in silence.

He laughed now and whipped the air with his foil.

"You certainly are not in earnest?" he said interrogatively. "Do you really mean that you want to fence with me?"

"If you think because I'm only a girl you can easily beat me, try it," she tauntingly replied, making a level thrust toward his breast.

Quick as a flash he parried, and then a merry clinking and twinkling of steel blades kept time to their swift movements. Instantly, by the sure sense which is half sight, half feeling — the sense that guides

the expert fencer's hand and wrist — Beverley knew that he had probably more than his match, and in ten seconds his attack was met by a time thrust in opposition which touched him sharply.

Alice sprang far back, lowered her point, and laughed.

"*Je vous salue, Monsieur Beverley!*" she cried, with childlike show of delight. "Did you feel the button?"

"Yes, I felt it," he said with frank acknowledgment in his voice, "it was cleverly done. Now give me a chance to redeem myself."

He began more carefully and found that she, too, was on her best mettle; but it was a short bout, as before. Alice seemed to give him an easy opening and he accepted it with a thrust; then something happened that he did not understand. The point of his foil was somehow caught under his opponent's hilt-guard while her blade seemed to twist around his; at the same time there was a wring and a jerk, the like of which he had never before felt, and he was disarmed, his wrist and fingers aching with the wrench they had received. — MAURICE THOMPSON, *Alice of Old Vincennes*, chap. vi.

There was a hush, and the waves of that vast human sea were stilled. A man, — lean, angular, with coat-tails flapping, — unfolded like a grotesque figure at a side-show. No confidence was there. Stooping forward, Abraham Lincoln began to speak, and Stephen Brice hung his head, and shuddered. Could this shrill falsetto be the same voice to which he had listened only that morning? Could this awkward, yellow man with his hands behind his back be he whom he had worshipped? Ripples of derisive laughter rose here and there, on the stand and from the crowd. Thrice distilled was the agony of those moments!

But what was this feeling that gradually crept over him? Surprise? Cautiously he raised his eyes. The hands were coming around to the front. Suddenly one of them was thrown sharply back, with a determined gesture, the head was raised, — and — and his shame was forgotten. In its stead wonder was come. But soon he lost even that, for his mind was gone on a journey. And when again he came to himself and looked upon Abraham Lincoln, this was a man transformed. The voice was no longer shrill. Nay, it was now a powerful instrument which played strangely on those who heard. Now it rose, and again it fell into tones so low as to start a stir which spread and spread, like a ripple in a pond, until it broke on the very edge of that vast audience. — WINSTON CHURCHILL, *The Crisis*, book ii, chap. v.

CHAPTER II

THE PARAGRAPH

SECTION 12

What a Paragraph Is

THE easiest way to learn to write is to write innumerable paragraphs. This is because the paragraph is really an essay in little, and therefore contains every element contained in an essay in large, or what is referred to elsewhere in this book as a whole composition.¹ In fact, every rule you learned in Chapter I, which deals primarily with the whole composition, can be applied effectively to the paragraph. You choose, limit, and word a subject for a paragraph in the same way that you do for a composition containing a number of paragraphs; you gather, select, and arrange material for a paragraph in the same way that you do for a longer composition; and you write the first rough draft of a paragraph, and revise it, in precisely the way you write and revise the first rough draft of a long composition. But, since the paragraph is small in compass, you can more readily study and practise it than you can the more cumbersome composition. It is chiefly for these reasons therefore, that, if you once come to understand thoroughly the

¹ A paragraph standing alone and complete in itself is of course a whole composition, but I have made this distinction between a paragraph and a whole composition because most whole compositions contain more than a single paragraph.

principles of paragraph construction (and the work laid down in this chapter is intended to help you to such an understanding), you will have no real difficulty to overcome, even if you should never study or practise the whole composition by itself, in the mere putting together of paragraphs in the longer articles you will no doubt write in school and in after life. Besides, in the work of the school in particular, there are many practical uses to which you can put your knowledge of the paragraph. Every note you write to a school-mate or to an instructor, every written answer you make to an examination question, whether it be in history, in physics, in mathematics, or what not, to say nothing of the paragraphs you do in one way or another in your English studies, you can make, if you will, just so much profitable practice in the management of the paragraph.

It is quite important, then, that you should know what a paragraph is. What a paragraph looks like on the page everybody who reads knows. To the eye it is nothing more than a sentence or a group of sentences set off from similar groups by the indention of the first word in the group. It is not so easy to give a precise definition of a paragraph. It has already been called "an essay in little." More exactly, it may be defined as a sentence or a closely related group of sentences devoted to the development of some very limited aspect of a general subject. It is to the essay what the word is to the sentence, what the sentence is to the paragraph itself. It is an organism in itself, complete in all its parts. While it may consist of a single sentence, it usually consists of a group of sentences.

NOTE. — As a rule, the first word of a paragraph in printed matter is set back to the right of the flush line of the page or column a dis-

tance equal to the width of the letter *m* of the type in which the matter is set up, or of the letters *m* and *n* put together; the first word of a paragraph in typewritten matter is usually removed five spaces to the right, while in ordinary handwritten matter it is customary to remove the first word of a paragraph an inch or an inch and a half to the right of the flush line.

Exercise 24

1. A common fault among young writers is the making of altogether too many indentions. Frequently enough, work is handed in in which nearly every sentence is made to stand by itself as a separate paragraph. The result is that the theme, though it may be fairly well written otherwise, seems to be a disjointed affair without logical sequence. Read the following paragraph, for instance, which is here purposely broken up and printed as if each sentence were itself a paragraph. As it stands, it is like a string of pearls without the string. But write it out with but one indention, and that at the beginning, — as it was originally written, — and note the improvement.

HOW TO KNOW RIGHT AND WRONG

“As to knowing right and wrong,” replied Brandon, “I think I can give you a rule which, although it may not cover the whole ground, is excellent for every-day use.

It is this:

Whatever makes others unhappy is wrong; whatever makes the world happier is good.

As to how we are always to do this, I cannot tell you.

One has to learn that by trying.

We can but try, and if we fail altogether, there is still virtue in even futile effort toward the right.” — CHARLES MAJOR, *When Knighthood Was in Flower*, chap. iii.

2. Every well-written paragraph develops some one thought. When you begin to develop that thought, you

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2. Every well-written paragraph develops some one thought. When you begin to develop that thought, you

begin a new paragraph. When you have done with developing that thought, you make an end of the paragraph. This means that nothing is put into a paragraph that does not belong to the thought that is developed in it; it means also that nothing of importance that does belong to the thought that is developed in it is omitted from the paragraph. As indention is used for the purpose of marking the beginning of a paragraph, you should look to it that you use the device to mark the beginning of a real paragraph only. Never make an indention which can have no meaning.

Does each indention, in the following selection, mark the beginning of a real paragraph?

THE HOBBY OF JOHN BULL, JR.

As to the matter of athletics, to which English boys are such devotees, I cannot help thinking that they are overdone, made a hobby of, and, like most hobbies in England, ridden to excess. No doubt it is a fine thing for a boy to have plenty of outdoor amusements; it is good for him to be an adept at running, leaping, climbing, swimming; but what in the world does he learn at football, the great winter game of the English schoolboy? Why do the English so neglect pastimes that would develop dexterity of hand and limb, and devote themselves to a game which seems to me to teach nothing except respect of brute force?

"Oh! but it cultivates their powers of endurance," says somebody.

That is true, I believe; although, from what I have seen of the two, I never could discover that an Englishman was more patient under the toothache than a Frenchman.

Now, to get bruised ribs and dislocated shoulders in practising flights out of second and third story windows I should understand; an accomplishment of that kind might be useful in case of fire; but to what end does all the bruising of football tend?

The game of football itself seems to be an end, and "not a means to an end," as, I believe, Mr. Matthew Arnold has remarked.

Yet, behold John Bull, junior, on the football ground! The hero of a bad cause, but for all that a hero; a lusty little fellow, fearless, hardy, strong-knit, iron-muscled, and mule-headed, who, rather than let go a ball that he holds firmly in his arms, will perform feats of valor; who, simply to pass this ball between two goals, will grovel in the dust, reckless of lacerated shoulders, a broken rib or jaw-bone, and will die on a bed of suffering with a smile upon his lips if he can only hear, before closing his eyes, that his side has won the game.

3. In the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611) no effort was made at paragraphing, indentions being used to mark verses only. Read *The Acts*, chap. xxvi, and indicate where paragraphs should begin.

This is one of the chapters which Ruskin, under the direction of his mother, committed to memory when he was a boy. Read what he says in his *Præterita*, chaps. i-ii, about his early study of the Bible, and the effect of this study upon his style. The chapters Ruskin committed to memory are these: *Exodus*, xv, xx; 2 *Samuel*, i (from verse 17 to end); 1 *Kings*, viii; *Psalms*, xxiii, xxxii, xc, xci, ciii, cxii, cxix, cxxxix; *Proverbs*, ii, iii, viii, xii; *Isaiah*, lviii; *Matthew*, v, vi, vii; *Acts*, xxvi; 1 *Corinthians*, xiii, xv; *James*, iv; *Revelation*, v, vi. These chapters are printed together in a little book called *The Bible and English Prose Style*, edited with an introduction by Professor A. S. Cook, and published by D. C. Heath & Co.

4. A paragraph is made of each speech in a conversation. Thus:—

TOLD TO A CHILD

"Hear the crickets holler," said Uncle Eb, as he followed the bank up into the open pasture.

"What makes 'em holler?" I asked.

"O, they're jes' filin' their saws an' thinkin'. Mebbe tellin' o' what's happened 'em. Been a hard day fer them little folks. Terrible flood in their country. Every one on 'em hed t' git up a steeple quick 's he could er be drowned. They hev their troubles an' they talk 'bout 'em, too."

"What do they file their saws for?" I inquired.

"Well, ye know," said he, "where they live the timber's thick an they hev hard work clearin' t' mek a home." — IRVING BACHELLER, *Eben Holden*, chap. ii.

SECTION 13

The Paragraph Subject

Every paragraph has its distinct subject. The difference between the subject of a paragraph and the subject of an essay or a whole composition is that the former is usually some very limited phase of the latter. The subject of any single paragraph in a whole composition is quite distinct from that of any other paragraph in the composition.

In the following paragraph, for example, the subject is, "The appearance of Ichabod Crane on horseback," a very small but essential part of the subject of the entire story, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The paragraph subject is not always as apparent as this one, but it is nevertheless true that every well-written paragraph has a clearly defined subject.

ICHABOD ON HORSEBACK

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers'; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and, as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called; and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse's tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed as they shamled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight. — IRVING.

HELPS TO STUDY: Point out the comic details in the paragraph. Find some other paragraph in which there are comic things, and note

whether they are expressed in a way similar to those in Irving's paragraph. Look up the meaning of "caricature," and then find, if you can, those parts of the description that seem to be caricature. Note how life is given by the use of words of motion, "jogged on," "flapping," "shambled out." How many and what figures do you find in the paragraph? What seems to be the object of most of these?

Exercise 25

Write out the subject of each paragraph in the following selection: —

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

March 4, 1865

BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN: At this second appearance to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it — all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war — seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part

of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

HELPS TO STUDY: Learn by heart at least a part of this address. A writer in *The Spectator* (London), May 2, 1891, makes this comment on Lincoln's address: "Lincoln remained master of the emotional and intellectual situation. In three or four hundred words that burn with the heat of their compression, he tells the history of the war and reads its lesson. No nobler thoughts were ever conceived. No man ever found words more adequate to his desire. Here is the whole tale of the nation's shame and misery, of her heroic struggles to free herself therefrom, and of her victory. Had Lincoln written a hundred times as much more, he would not have said more fully what he desired to say. Every thought receives its complete expression, and there is no word employed which does not directly and manifestly contribute to the development of the central thought." Read also Lincoln's *First Inaugural Address*; his letter to Thurlow Weed, March 15, 1865; and compare Washington's *Farewell Address to the People of the United States*. For the latter, see *The Heart of Oak Books*, vol. vi.

SECTION 14

The Subject-Sentence

The subject-sentence of a paragraph contains whatever statement it is thought best to make of the paragraph subject. Except in stories, where it is not much used, the subject-sentence is most frequently placed at the beginning of the paragraph, although it may stand anywhere between the beginning and the end, or at the very end of the paragraph. Where the thought of the paragraph is so easily followed that no statement of the paragraph subject is needed, no subject-sentence of course is required. To state the subject of your paragraph in a single sentence, and then to put that sentence wherever in your paragraph it happens to be most effective to tell your reader what you have written about, is a help to yourself, because it induces you to think and to write

clearly, and a help to your reader as well, because it enables him, often at a glance, to tell just what your paragraph is about.

How great a help the subject-sentence may be to the reader is shown by the following paragraph. Read the paragraph as it stands, with the subject-sentence omitted, then read it again, supplying the subject-sentence from the foot-note below, and observe how much more easily at the second reading you catch the thought of the paragraph.

[Position of the omitted subject-sentence.] To be successful, one must possess aptitude for the particular business that engages him. He must love it for its own sake. If, suited to and loving it, he concentrates upon it all his energies, he is tolerably sure to succeed according to the measure of the business itself and of his own capacity. In other words, success is the round peg in the round hole, and the square peg in the square hole, and, big or little, is to be attained in proportion to the coincidence of these requirements with the opportunity and the man. In the cases of Cæsar and Napoleon, they reached the altitudes of human endeavor. In the case of the country lawyer, or doctor, or banker, or merchant, he reaches the lower ranges; but, if happiness be considered one of the ingredients of success, these latter surpass Cæsar and Napoleon, who were not very happy in their lives, and the death of both of whom was tragic. — HENRY WATTERSON, *Success*, February, 1900.¹

In the next paragraph a bit of an introduction has been put in to fit the paragraph into the story to which it belongs. In some instances only a phrase or a clause precedes the subject-sentence, while in others it is preceded by so many sentences that it is delayed until the middle of the paragraph is reached, as in the case of the second paragraph following.

¹ [Omitted subject-sentence.] Success in life is largely referable to the fulfilment of two conditions indicated by the terms "aptitude" and "concentration."

HERDING IN INDIA

Then Mowgli picked out a shady place, and lay down and slept while the buffaloes grazed round him. *Herding in India is one of the laziest things in the world.* The cattle move and crunch, and lie down, and move on again, and they do not even low. They only grunt, and the buffaloes very seldom say anything, but get down into the muddy pools one after another, and work their way into the mud till only their noses and staring china-blue eyes show above the surface, and there they lie like logs. The sun makes the rocks dance in the heat, and the herd-children hear one kite (never any more) whistling almost out of sight overhead, and they know that if they died, or a cow died, that kite would sweep down, and the next kite miles away would see him drop and follow, and the next, and the next, and almost before they were dead there would be a score of hungry kites come out of nowhere. Then they sleep and wake and sleep again, and weave little baskets of dried grass and put grass-hoppers in them; or catch two praying-mantises and make them fight; or string a necklace of red and black jungle-nuts; or watch a lizard basking on a rock, or a snake hunting a frog near the wallows. Then they sing long, long songs with odd native quavers at the end of them, and the day seems longer than most people's whole lives, and perhaps they make a mud castle with mud figures of men and horses and buffaloes, and put reeds into the men's hands, and pretend that they are kings and the figures are their armies, or that they are gods to be worshipped. Then evening comes, and the children call, and the buffaloes lumber up out of the sticky mud with noises like gun-shots going off one after the other, and they all string across the gray plain back to the twinkling village lights. — KIPLING, *The Jungle Book*.

HELPS TO STUDY: "Herding in India is one of the laziest things in the world," writes Kipling, and then he develops this thought in a purposely long-drawn-out paragraph, by means of which he imparts much of this lazy feeling to the reader. But how does he do it? By the construction of his sentences? Note the effect of the "ands" and "ors." Rewrite a part of the paragraph, omitting most of the "ands" and "ors," read what you have written, and observe the difference in effect. By the words? What words, in particular, add to

this effect? By what he says takes place? What incidents, in particular, add to the effect? What mental picture do you get most clearly? Is it "they all string across the gray plain back to the twinkling village"? Or, is it some other?

THE ECONOMY OF DOG-SLEDGING

A Siberian dog will pull only a quarter as much as a man can pull, and he needs about a pound of food per day, or half as much as the man. But he requires no sleeping-bag or tent, no extra clothing and boots, no water has to be melted for him, he smokes no tobacco. Best of all, if he gets hurt, or becomes ill or exhausted, you don't have to drag him on the sledge or turn back. You convert him into fresh meat for the survivors. *That is the economy of dog-sledging in these dashes for the Pole.* Your four-legged comrade drags fifty or sixty pounds of load, and he carries twenty-five or thirty pounds of meat "on the hoof." But killing these faithful fellows who have worked in harness by your side, who lick the hand that is about to smite them, and look up into the murderer's eyes with true dog trustfulness, was the bitterest of all the bitter things we had to do. We killed only half a dozen, using a rifle, and did the job off a little way from the camp, behind a hummock, in a sneaking sort of way, as if we were ashamed of it, as we were.—WALTER WELLMAN, *McClure's Magazine*, 14:410.

The subject-sentence is sometimes used to point a story:—

A MESSAGE TO GARCIA

In all this Cuban-business there is one man stands out on the horizon of my memory like Mars at perihelion. When war broke out between Spain and the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail nor telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his coöperation, and quickly. What to do! Some one said to the President, "There's a fellow by the name of Rowan will find Garcia for you, if anybody can." Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How "the fellow by the name of Rowan" took the letter, sealed it up in an oil-skin pouch, strapped it

over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out on the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia, are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail. The point I wish to make is this: McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, "Where is he at?" By the Eternal! there is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college of the land. *It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebræ which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies: do the thing—"Carry a message to Garcia."*—ELBERT HUBBARD, *A Message to Garcia*.

Very rarely the subject is stated at the beginning of the paragraph and again in another form at the end. This device gives the subject the greatest possible emphasis, since, as you will learn later, these are the two places in a paragraph which most readily catch and hold the reader's eye:—

WHAT THRIFT IS

*Genuine thrift is not mere saving, but rather "postponed consumption," a laying aside not for the purpose of hoarding, but in order to make a future purchase. The small boy who pointed to a penny bank and said with intense pride, "I banks there," would have been no better for his emotion if his conception of what money is had not got beyond the belief that it is a commodity to hold. The value to him of his bank was that he was learning that money is more useful at one time than at another, and that by depositing it in some safe place, free from the allurements of the candy or the cigarette shop, he was reserving it for a more profitable use. The whole secret of right thrift lies in the formula: *Save wisely, so as to be able to spend judiciously in a time of need which will probably be greater than that of the present.**—MARY WILLCOX BROWN, *The Development of Thrift*.

Frequently enough you will find paragraphs that contain no subject-sentence whatever. Usually these are

paragraphs of narration or description, in which case it is difficult and perhaps undesirable to reduce to a single sentence a summary of the events narrated or of the objects described, or the paragraph is one whose subject is so clear that it is left to the inference of the reader.

Exercise 26

What is the subject-sentence in each of the following paragraphs? Can you account for its position in the paragraph?¹

BURIED ALIVE

What was my horror to find myself buried alive! After a short reflection, I began to work the sand away from the side, that I might turn round. There were some feet of empty space, into which I threw the sand as I worked it away; but the small quantity of air soon made it so foul that I a thousand times wished myself dead, and made several attempts to strangle myself. Thirst almost deprived me of my senses, but as often as I put my mouth to the sand I inhaled fresh air. My sufferings were incredible, and I imagine I passed eight hours in this situation. My spirits fainted; again I recovered and began to labor, but the earth was as high as my chin, and I had no more space where I might throw the sand. I made a more desperate effort, drew my body into a ball, and turned round; I now faced the stone; there being an opening at the top, I respired fresher air. I rooted away the sand under the stone, and let it sink so that I might creep over; at length I once more arrived in my dungeon!—*Life and Adventures of Baron Trenck* (Holcroft's translation), vol. ii, chap. v.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD

When the chick first emerges from the shell, the Creator's studio in which he was organized and shaped, it is a very little world with which he finds himself in relation. First the nest, then the hen-coop,

¹ If necessary to enforce further the principles of Section 14, this exercise may be continued with other paragraphs in this book or in the textbooks in science, history, and literature.

by and by the barnyard with occasional predatory incursions into the neighbor's garden — and his little universe has reached its boundaries. Just so with my experience of atmospheric existence. The low room of the old house — the little patch called the front yard — somewhat larger than the Turkish rug beneath my rocking-chair — the back yard with its wood-house, its carriage-house, its barn, and, let me not forget, its pig-sty. These were the world of my earliest experiences. But from the western window of the room where I was born I could see the vast expanse of the Common, with the far-away "Washington Elm" as its central figure — the immeasurably distant hills of the horizon, and the infinite of space in which these gigantic figures were projected — all these, in unworded impressions — vague pictures swimming by each other as the eyes rolled without aim — threw the lights and shadows which floated by them. From this centre I felt my way into the creation beyond. — Holmes, in J. T. MORSE's *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes*, vol. i, chap. ii.

RADIANT HEAT AND RADIANT LIGHT

The radiant heat from the sun goes along with the light from the sun, and when you shut one off, — put a screen so as to intercept the one, — the other is intercepted at the same time. In the case of a solar eclipse, you have the sun's heat as long as you see the smallest portion of the sun's disk. The instant the last portion of the disk is obscured, the heat disappears with the light. That shows that the heat and light take not only the same course, but also the same time to come to us. If the one lagged ever so little behind the other, — if the heat disappeared sooner than the light, or the light sooner than the heat, — it would show that though they both moved in straight lines, the one moved faster than the other; but the result of observation is that we find, so far as our most delicate measurements show, that heat and light are simultaneously intercepted. — TAIT, *Recent Advances*, chap. viii.

A REMARKABLE TRADE

I give the story as it was told me, and it was told me for a fact. A man fell from a housetop in the city of Aberdeen, and was brought into the hospital with broken bones. He was asked what was his trade, and replied that he was a *tapper*. No one had ever heard of

such a thing before; the officials were filled with curiosity; they besought an explanation. It appeared that when a party of slaters were engaged upon a roof, they would now and then be taken with a fancy for the public-house. Now a seamstress, for example, might slip away from her work and no one be the wiser; but if these fellows adjourned, the tapping of the mallets would cease, and thus the neighborhood be advertised of their defection. Hence the career of the tapper. He has to do the tapping and keep up an industrious bustle on the house-top during the absence of the slaters. When he taps for only one or two the thing is child's-play, but when he has to represent a whole troop, it is then that he earns his money in the sweat of his brow. Then must he bound from spot to spot, reduplicate, triplicate, sexduplicate his single personality, and swell and hasten his blows, until he produce a perfect illusion for the ear, and you would swear that a crowd of emulous masons were continuing merrily to roof the house. It must be a strange sight from an upper window. — STEVENSON, *The Amateur Emigrant*, chap. vii.

Exercise 27

1. Find five paragraphs, one having the subject-sentence at the beginning, one having it near the middle, one having it at the end, one having it at the beginning and repeating it in another form at the end, and one in which it is omitted. Try in each case to account for the location or omission of the subject-sentence.

2. On one of the following subjects write a paragraph in which you make the subject-sentence as conspicuous as you can. Then, if you have the time, rewrite the paragraph, moving the subject-sentence to some other position in the paragraph. Hand in both versions of your paragraph, and be prepared to defend one or the other of the two positions for the subject-sentence.

1. The story of Pau-Puk-Keewis. (You are to write the story for a child who has never read *Hiawatha*. Test the worth of your story by reading it to some child.)

2. Hints on the decoration of a favorite room. (If you had ten dollars to spend for material, what decorations should you make?)
 3. The last air-ship. (Tell what the newspapers say about it.)
 4. Trouble at school.
 5. What I have observed about the bobolink (or some other favorite bird).
 6. How books should be cared for. (Perhaps you can write most easily on this subject if you tell how books should *not* be treated. Book-lovers like to imagine that books are persons.)
 7. A leaf from my scrap-book. (Find the most curious scrap you have, and write about it.)
 8. The fruit vender on the corner. (The tamale man, the flower girl, the apple woman, the pop-corn man, the peanut man, etc.)
 9. Mood of a boy unjustly punished. (A real recollection of your childhood.)
 10. The manners of the children of the Puritans. (Contrast with the manners of the children of to-day; ask your teacher or librarian for references to the best books on the subject.)
3. Examine the paragraph written by some member of the class for 2, and tell whether the subject-sentence is well placed.
 4. Find in some book of science a paragraph constructed like the one by Tait (Exercise 26). Describe one of your own experiments in the same manner.
 5. Read an essay by some author, and make a list of the subject-sentences in it.

SECTION 15

Construction of Paragraphs

Now that you have learned what a paragraph is, how a paragraph subject differs from a whole composition subject, and what a subject-sentence is and where it appears in a paragraph, if it appears at all, you are ready to begin the construction of paragraphs.

How, then, is a paragraph constructed? A writer, let us suppose, wishes to make clear to his readers what a steam-engine is and how it works, and he wishes to do this in a single paragraph. He thinks he can do this most effectively by explaining what a steam-engine is in its most elementary form, and, with this purpose in mind, he puts into a single sentence the substance of what he thinks he will say: "The steam-engine in its most elementary form consists of cylinder, piston, water, and fire." This is his subject-sentence, since it contains the statement he thinks it worth while to make of his paragraph subject. Now, in one sense, this sentence contains all the writer has to say about his subject, because, if he adds anything more to this sentence, it will be merely to amplify what he has already said. But, then, it is quite essential that he should add something more, because there is so much latent meaning in the sentence that he can hardly expect his readers to understand it in its present form. He must bring this latent meaning out from its hiding-place. What sort of cylinder is meant? What kind of piston? How is the piston to work? Where is the water put? What is the fire for? These and similar matters he must make clear. He therefore decides to amplify his paragraph subject in this fashion:—

[Sentences used to amplify the paragraph subject.] Take a hollow cylinder, . . . the bottom closed while the top remains open, and pour in water to the height of a few inches. Next cover the water with a flat plate, or piston, which fits the interior of the cylinder perfectly; then apply heat to the water, and we shall witness the following phenomena. After the lapse of some minutes the water will begin to boil, and the steam accumulating at the upper surface will make room for itself by raising the piston slightly. As the boiling continues, more and more steam will be formed, and raise the piston

higher and higher, till all the water is boiled away, and nothing but steam is left in the cylinder. [Subject-sentence.] Now this machine, consisting of cylinder, piston, water, and fire, is the steam-engine in its most elementary form. [Restatement; see Section 21.] For a steam-engine may be defined as an apparatus for doing work by means of heat applied to water; and since raising such a weight as the piston is a form of doing work, this apparatus, clumsy and inconvenient though it may be, answers the definition precisely. — G. C. V. HOLMES, quoted in Lamont's *Specimens of Exposition*.

There are of course other methods, besides the one just illustrated, for the construction of paragraphs; so many, in fact, that only the most typical will be treated in this book. The methods here treated are these:¹—

1. By telling what a thing is: Definition.
2. By telling what a thing is *not*: Reversion.
3. By telling what a thing is like: Comparison.
4. By telling what a thing is *not* like: Contrast.
5. By telling about one of a number of things: Example.
6. By telling a thing in more than one way: Restatement.

NOTE.—The explanatory (expository) paragraph is made the basis of this discussion, just as the explanatory sentence is made the basis of the discussion in Chapter III.

¹ I have worded these methods in a manner to admit of their being easily understood and remembered. They are intended merely as practical helps, and nicer distinctions will be drawn in the course of treatment. It is possible that a scientific division might be made on the psychological principle of the association of ideas, but I have been unable to make one that is at all helpful in learning to write. Besides, writers on psychology differ materially in this matter of the association of ideas. The laws most held to are contiguity, similarity, and contrast. Recent writers, however, have shortened even this brief list. Thus, while Sully recognizes both similarity and contiguity, Herbert Spencer reduces all three to similarity. James, Baldwin, Scripture, Dewey, and Ladd seem to settle upon the law of contiguity.

SECTION 16

Construction of Paragraphs

1. BY TELLING WHAT A THING IS: DEFINITION

When Mr. Holmes wrote the paragraph quoted in the last section, he constructed a paragraph by telling what a thing is — he gave a definition of a steam-engine. So do you tell what a thing is, when, in your classes, you define a circle, a verb, a fern, an eclipse, equation of payments, what not; or when, in your talk, you try to explain to somebody your notion of a foul or a ruff, a muff or a tippet, a punt or a jacket. It is not very difficult to tell what some things are, because we know so well what they are. But we often blunder when we try to tell what an unfamiliar thing is. We sometimes blunder even when we try to tell what a familiar thing is. And, by the way, what is a *blunder*? Do you know how it differs from an error? from a mistake? from a bull?¹ How should you set about telling what it is? Should you consult a dictionary? That might help you. A blunder is “a mistake made through precipitance or mental confusion; a gross or stupid mistake” (*Century*); “a heedless or stupid mistake” (*Standard*). But it is better to study the thing itself. Mr. Wheatley, who tells very clearly what a blunder is, seems to have done this, but the authors of the definitions just quoted, we suspect, did not, for their definitions are far from precise. Here is Mr. Wheatley’s definition of a blunder: —

¹ “Ireland makes up for her want of practical sagacity by the wit of her writers, the readiness of her repartees, and the drollery of her *bulls*.” — S. S. Cox, *Why We Laugh*, chap. I.

WHAT A BLUNDER IS

The words "blunder" and "mistake" are often treated as synonyms; thus we usually call our blunders mistakes, and our friends style our mistakes blunders. In truth, the class of blunders is a subdivision of the *genus* mistakes. Many mistakes are very serious in their consequences, but there is almost always some sense of fun connected with a blunder, which is a mistake usually caused by some mental confusion. Lexicographers state that it is an error due to stupidity and carelessness, but blunders are often caused by a too great sharpness and quickness. Sometimes a blunder is no mistake at all, as when a man blunders on the right explanation; thus he arrives at the right goal, but by an unorthodox road. . . . Some years ago there was an article in the *Saturday Review* on "the knowledge necessary to make a blunder," and this title gives the clew to what a blunder really is. It is caused by a confusion of two or more things, and unless something is known of these things a blunder cannot be made. A perfectly ignorant man has not sufficient knowledge to blunder. — H. B. WHEATLEY, *Literary Blunders*, 1-2.

To tell what a thing is, you must first well know that thing; you must know it so well that you can fix its boundaries — to the north, to the east, to the south, to the west. If you cannot tell what a thing is, and in simple and straightforward language, you may be quite sure that you do not yet know what it is.

Exercise 28

What things are precisely defined in the following selections? What things are pleasantly, but not precisely, defined? Would a "dictionary definition" of these latter things be better than their present definitions? So far as you can, point out the subject-sentence of each paragraph, and indicate the sentences devoted to "telling what a thing is."

THE MEANING OF PUBLIC DUTY

By the words public duty I do not necessarily mean official duty, although it may include that. I mean simply that constant and active practical participation in the details of politics without which, upon the part of the most intelligent citizens, the conduct of public affairs falls under the control of selfish and ignorant, or crafty and venal men. I mean that personal attention which, as it must be incessant, is often wearisome and even repulsive, to the details of politics, attendance at meetings, service upon committees, care and trouble and expense of many kinds, patient endurance of rebuffs, chagrins, ridicules, disappointments, defeats — in a word, all those duties and services which, when selfishly and meanly performed, stigmatize a man as a mere politician, but whose constant, honorable, intelligent, and vigilant performance is the gradual building, stone by stone, and layer by layer, of that great temple of self-restrained liberty which all generous souls mean that our government shall be.

— GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, *The Public Duty of Educated Men*.

FROM THE SCIENCES

A square is a plane figure with four equal sides and four right angles.

A triangle is a plane figure bounded by three straight lines.

Biology is the science that treats of living organisms.

Botany is that branch of biology that treats of plants.

Bryology is that branch of botany that treats of mosses.

OLD LINE WHIGS

"I reckon St. Louis is a nest of Southern Democrats," Mr. Lincoln remarked, "and not much opposition."

"There are quite a few Old Line Whigs, sir," ventured Stephen, smiling.

"Joe," said Mr. Lincoln, "did you ever hear Warfield's definition of an Old Line Whig?"

Mr. Medill had not.

"A man who takes his toddy regularly, and votes the Democratic ticket occasionally, and who wears ruffled shirts."

Both of these gentlemen laughed, and two more in the seat behind, who had an ear to the conversation. — WINSTON CHURCHILL, *The Crisis*, book ii, chap. iii.

ABOUT DOGS

"Sir," she said, in true Johnsonian style, "what height should a mastiff dog attain at the age of six months?"

The policeman stared at her in utter astonishment.

"They do be all sizes, mum," he replied blankly, "like a piece of cheese."

"My relative in the West," explained Miss Pellicoe, "has sent me a dog, and I am given to understand that his age is six months. As he is phenomenally large, I have thought it best to seek for information. Has my relative been imposed upon?"

"It's har-r-d to tell, mum," replied the policeman, dubiously. Then his countenance brightened. "Does his feet fit him?" he inquired.

"What, — what do you mean?" asked Miss Pellicoe, shrinking back a little.

"Is his feet like blackin' boxes on th' end of his legs?"

"They are certainly very large."

"Thin 'tis a pup. You see, mum, with a pup, 'tis this way. The feet starts first, an' the pup grows up to 'em like. Av they match him, he's grown. Av he has artics on, he's a pup." — H. C. BUNNER, *Short Sizes; Hector*.

THE "GENUS" BOY

Boys lose their charm when they get fifteen or sixteen years of age. The clever ones, no doubt, become more interesting to the teacher, but they no longer belong to the *genus* boy that you love for his very defects as much as for his good qualities.

I call "boys" that delightful, lovable race of young scamps from eleven to fourteen years old. At that age all have redeeming points, and all are lovable. I never objected to any, except perhaps to those who aimed at perfection, especially the ones who were successful in their efforts.

For my part, I like a boy with a redeeming fault or two.

By "boys" I mean little fellows who manage, after a game of football, to get their right arm out of order, that they may be excused writing their exercises for a week or so; who do not work because they have an examination to prepare, but because you offer them an inducement to do so, whether in the shape of rewards, or maybe something less pleasant you may keep in your cupboard. — MAX O'RELL, *John Bull, Junior*, chap. iv.

THE TRUE GENTLEMAN

Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy-chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain, because it is inevitable, to bereavement, because it is irreparable, and to death, because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds; who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their

strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration, indulgence: he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable, beautiful, or useful, to which he does not assent; he honors the ministers of religion, and it contents him to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is the friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilization. — JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN, *Idea of a University*.

Exercise 29

1. Make brief and accurate definitions of at least five of the objects named below: —

BOOTS AND SHOES	NEWSPAPERS	WITH NEEDLE AND THREAD
shoemaker	editor	baste
heel	reporter	hem
insole	contributor	overcast
gaiter	advertisement	shirr
polish	subscription	pleat
eyelet	news	darn
tongue	renewal	patch
cordovan	issue	knit

CAUTION. — Avoid such ridiculous statements as these: "A line is when you draw a mark from one place to another," "A straight line is not curved at all," "An axiom is something that you know already," and the like. Look up a few good definitions in your best text-books, and make them your models.

2. What is a foul? a base? a strike? a punt? (In baseball.)

3. Tell what a scythe is.

4. With the help of an unabridged dictionary,¹ write out accurate definitions of the more difficult words in the following poem, and then, in a single paragraph, tell the story of the poem in your own words. The latter you can best do after you have studied the stanzas attentively; write without book, and be careful not to follow slavishly the language of the poet :—

THE WRECK

BY JOHN RUSKIN

Its masts of might, its sails so free,
Had borne the scatheless keel
Through many a day of darken'd sea,
And many a storm of steel;
When all the winds were calm, it met
(With home-returning prore)
With the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore.

¹ In most of the things that go to the making of a good unabridged dictionary of moderate size, particularly in the difficult art of definition, the *Standard Dictionary* is a model of excellence. *Webster's*, *Worcester's*, and the *International* also are well-known works. *The Century Dictionary* is considerably fuller than any of these, and is to be commended for the many quotations that illustrate the precise meanings of the words defined. *The New English Dictionary* (Clarendon Press), however, is the largest and most authoritative dictionary of our language, the court of last resort in matters of English lexicography. The best abridged dictionary, which will do well enough for most of the work of the high school, is the *Students' Standard Dictionary*.

The crest of the conqueror
On many a brow was bright;
The dew of many an exile's eye
Had dimm'd the dancing sight;
And for love and for victory
One welcome was in store,

In the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore.

The voices of the night are mute
Beneath the moon's eclipse;
The silence of the fitful flute
Is on the dying lips.
The silence of my lonely heart
Is kept for evermore

In the lull
Of the waves
On a low lee shore.

HELPS TO STUDY: Define *scatheless keel*, *prore*, *lee*, *crest*. Is the vessel a merchantman or a ship of war? How do you know? What is the mood of the returning sailors? How do you understand the first four lines in stanza 2? The first four lines in stanza 3? What sound is imitated in the last three lines of each stanza? What phrase gives you the most vivid mental picture? What do you notice about the length of the words? Has this any effect on the melody of the poem? Make a list of the nouns; make another of the adjectives. Do these lists teach you any lesson? What kind of words do most of the describing? After you have written the story of the poem, learn the poem by heart.

SECTION 17

Construction of Paragraphs

2. BY TELLING WHAT A THING IS *NOT*: REVERSION

Often enough we can most effectively tell what a thing is, by telling what it is *not*. For want of a better name,

we shall call this the method of reversion. Every coin has an obverse and a reverse side, a face and a back. Reversion, to keep the figure, is the turning of the coin over in a way to bring its reverse side, or back, into full view. It is a way of saying that this side is not that side, that this thing is not that thing. As nearly every notion has as its opposite some other notion, — light is not darkness, white is not black, sound is not silence, pleasure is not pain, life is not death, and so on, — this method may be effectively used at times to add both clearness and force to a paragraph.

Burke has used this method in the first part of the following paragraph. After stating that his proposition is peace, — he is referring to the resolutions he is about to move for conciliation with the American colonies, — he goes on to make clear just the sort of peace it is, by telling the sort of peace it is *not* : —

[Subject-sentence.] The proposition is peace. [Reversion.] Not peace through the medium of war; not peace to be hunted through the labyrinth of intricate and endless negotiations; not peace to arise out of universal discord fomented from principle in all parts of the empire; not peace to depend on the juridical determination of perplexing questions, or the precise marking of the shadowy boundaries of a complex government. [Restatement; see Section 21.] It is simple peace, sought in its natural course and in its ordinary haunts. It is peace sought in the spirit of peace, and laid in principles purely pacific. I propose, by removing the ground of the difference, and by restoring the *former unsuspecting confidence of the colonies in the mother country*,¹ to give permanent satisfaction to your people; and (far from a scheme of ruling by discord) to reconcile them to each other in the same act and by the same bond of the very same interest which reconciles them to British government. — BURKE, *Speech on Conciliation with America*.

¹ The italics are Burke's.

Exercise 30

Explain how reversion is used in the following paragraphs. The way to study these paragraphs is to ask yourself first, "What is the subject-sentence of this paragraph?" Having found the subject-sentence, ask yourself regarding every other sentence in the paragraph, "Is reversion used in any part of this sentence?" You will find that few paragraphs are constructed by any one method, and in the paragraphs that follow, other methods, besides that of reversion, will be found to have been used in building them up:—

THE IDEAL STATE

We will try to make some small piece of English ground beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads; we will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched, but the sick; none idle, but the dead. We will have no liberty upon it; but instant obedience to known law, and appointed persons: no equality upon it; but recognition of every betterness that we can find, and reprobation of every worseness. When we want to go anywhere, we will go there quietly and safely, not at forty miles an hour in the risk of our lives; when we want to carry anything anywhere, we will carry it either on the backs of beasts, or on our own, or in carts, or in boats; we will have plenty of flowers and vegetables in our gardens, plenty of corn and grass in our fields, — and few bricks. We will have some music and poetry; the children shall learn to dance to it, and sing it; perhaps some of the old people, in time, may also. We will have some art, moreover; we will at least try if, like the Greeks, we can't make some pots. — RUSKIN, *Fors Clavigera*, letter v.

PICTORIAL COMPOSITION

Pictorial composition may be defined as the proportionate arranging and unifying of the different features and objects of a picture. It is not the huddling together of miscellaneous studio properties — a dummy, a vase, a rug here, and a sofa, a fireplace, a table there;

it is not the lugging in by the ears of unimportant people to fill up the background of the canvas, as in the spectacular play; it is not taking a real group from nature and transplanting it upon canvas. There must be exercise of judgment on the part of the artist as to fitness and position, as to harmony of relation, proportion, color, light; and there must be a skilful uniting of all the parts into one perfect whole.—J. C. VAN DYKE, *How to Judge of a Picture*, 95.

ON ENTERING THE WOOD

Once within it, it was as though the sun had suddenly sunk from the heavens. The pines, of magnificent height and girth, were so closely set that far overhead, where the branches began, was a heavy roof of foliage, impervious to the sunshine, brooding, dark and sullen as a thundercloud, over the cavernous world beneath. There was no undergrowth, no clinging vines, no bloom, no color; only the dark, innumerable tree trunks and the purplish-brown, scented, and slippery earth. The air was heavy, cold, and still, like cave air; the silence as blank and awful as the silence beneath the earth. — MARY JOHNSTON, *To Have and to Hold*, chap. xv.

THE CONDITION AND CHARACTER OF THE COLONISTS

We learn from the results of this experiment, how fortunate was our own condition, and how admirably the character of our people was calculated for setting the great example of popular governments. The possession of power did not turn the heads of the American people, for they had long been in the habit of exercising a great degree of self-control. Although the paramount authority of the parent state existed over them, yet a large field of legislation had always been open to our Colonial assemblies. They were accustomed to representative bodies and the forms of free government; they understood the doctrine of the division of power among different branches, and the necessity of checks on each. The character of our countrymen, moreover, was sober, moral, and religious; and there was little in the change to shock their feelings of justice and humanity, or even to disturb an honest prejudice. We had no domestic throne to overturn, no privileged orders to cast down, no violent changes of property to encounter. In the American Revolution, no man sought or wished for more than to defend and enjoy his own. None hoped for plunder.

or for spoil. Rapacity was unknown to it; the axe was not among the instruments of its accomplishment; and we all know that it could not have lived a single day under any well-founded imputation of possessing a tendency adverse to the Christian religion. — WEBSTER, *The Bunker Hill Monument*.

Exercise 31

Write a paragraph on one of the following subjects, developing your subject-sentence, in part at least, by means of reversion : —

1. You live in a small town in the interior of your state. Your cousin, who lives in New York, has written you that he intends to visit you. Write to him, telling him what he need not expect to see.

2. Last night you dreamed that you visited an ideal school. The school was not like the one you now attend.

3. Write to your uncle in the city, urging him to spend the summer with you. Tell him what discomforts he will *not* have to suffer in the country.

4. Imagine a revolutionary veteran coming to life at the beginning of the twentieth century.

5. Imagine a twentieth-century boy visiting a Boston boy in Franklin's time.

6. Your friend from a distance has written you that he lives in an almost perfectly governed town. Reproduce his letter, naming such faults in your town government as have been remedied in his.

7. Your mother has told you about the school she attended when a girl. Reproduce her story. Additional facts can be learned from Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, Edward Eggleston's *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* and *The Hoosier Schoolboy*, and similar works.

8. Write a humorous paragraph in which you tell what the North Pole is *not* ("Accordin' to what I hear th' North Pole ain't like a tilly-graft pole, a barber pole, a fishin' pole, a polecat, a poll tax, a Maypole, a Russhyan Pole, or annything that ye can see, smell, or ate. Whin ye get to it it is no diff'rent fr'm bein' annywhere on th' ice. Th' on'y way ye know ye're there is," etc., etc. — Mr. DOOLEY [P. F. Dunne], *American newspaper*).

9. When the circus comes to town. (Tell what they have advertised, but do not show.)

10. On the freedom of frogs. (Take your hint from the paragraph on *The Economy of Dog-Sledging*, Section 14.)

11. Why Bill Lazy goes fishing.

12. There is no such fun at school nowadays as when Tom Sawyer went to school. (Tom Sawyer, you may imagine, was a fun-loving boy, of a piece with Mark Twain's boy, who once attended your school; perhaps you remember some of his pranks.)

13. On the pleasures of going barefoot. (Whittier's *The Barefoot Boy* will suggest the tone.)

SECTION 18

Construction of Paragraphs

3. BY TELLING WHAT A THING IS LIKE: COMPARISON

If you will turn to a map of California, and glance along the coast-line until your eye rests at a point midway between the northern and southern extremities of the state, you will observe that the Pacific Ocean there bites into the land to form the Bay of Monterey. If you will study the confines of the latter a moment or two, you will further observe that they form a marked and noticeable figure. Now let us suppose that you wish to convey to a friend your own vivid notion of this somewhat uncommon figure for a bay. How shall you do it? A moment's thought will convince you that the mere naming of metes and bounds, even if you should take enough pains to describe accurately their intricate turnings and windings, would not be very suggestive. It would be most effective, very likely, to compare the Bay of Monterey to some object with which your friend is familiar, and which will suggest to him the peculiar shape you have in mind. This is precisely what Stevenson has done in the following paragraph, except that he was not put to the trouble of

thinking out the comparison, remembering as he did the very apt one already made by General Sherman : —

THE BAY OF MONTEREY

The Bay of Monterey has been compared by no less a person than General Sherman to a bent fishing-hook ; and the comparison, if less important than the march through Georgia, still shows the eye of a soldier for topography. Santa Cruz sits exposed at the shank ; the mouth of the Salinas River is at the middle of the bend ; and Monterey itself is cosily ensconced beside the barb. Thus the ancient capital of California faces across the bay, while the Pacific Ocean, though hidden by low hills and forest, bombards her left flank and rear with never-dying surf. In front of the town, the long line of sea-beach trends north and northwest, and then westward to enclose the bay. — STEVENSON, *Across the Plains*.

Though there are no two things in the world that are precisely alike,¹ there are innumerable objects that are alike in certain particulars or under certain circumstances. These likenesses, with their accompanying unlikenesses, it is the business of education to enable us to detect. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that that man has the most liberal education who can detect for himself the greatest number of these resemblances and differences, and that that man has the mightiest power who can most effectively give expression to them, whatever form that expression may take. The first is he who sees most clearly what things really are, and the second is he who makes the best use of what he sees. In the writing you will have to do, it will be helpful to bear in mind at least four cautions: first, the likeness you point out should be a real likeness, and not a fanciful one ; second, it should go to the heart

¹ See Section 5 ; also G. T. Ladd, *Primer of Psychology*, chap. xiii, especially the opening paragraph.

of the things compared ; third, the thing to which you compare another thing should be familiar to your readers ; and fourth, the comparison should not be worked out in wearisome detail — when a comparison has served its purpose, which is primarily to make clear something that is not clear, it has done all it is well capable of doing.

SECTION 19

Construction of Paragraphs

4. BY TELLING WHAT A THING IS *NOT* LIKE: CONTRAST

Comparison, strictly interpreted, includes contrast as well as comparison proper, that is, it has to do not only with the likenesses of things, but with their unlikenesses as well. Some comparison, either expressed or implied, must always precede or accompany contrast, if for nothing more than to show that the things compared are different. Here, however, it seems best to speak of the two methods separately. It frequently happens that you can best get to the heart of a matter by telling what a thing is *not* like, or what is pretty much the same thing, by telling in what respect things are *not alike*.

Mr. Matthews contrasts Franklin and Emerson in the following paragraphs :—

FRANKLIN AND EMERSON

Benjamin Franklin, born in Boston almost a century before Ralph Waldo Emerson was born there, lived long enough to see the straggling colonies with their scant four hundred thousand settlers grow into a vigorous young nation of four million inhabitants. Emerson, born only thirteen years after Franklin's death, lived long enough to see the United States increase to thirty-eight, and a population of five and a half millions expand to a population of fifty millions. He

survived to behold a little nation grow to be a mighty people, able to fight a righteous war without flinching.

Different as they are, Franklin and Emerson are both typical Americans—taken together they give us the two sides of the American character. Franklin stands for the real, and Emerson for the ideal. Franklin represents the prose of American life, and Emerson the poetry. Franklin's power is limited by the bounds of common sense, while Emerson's appeal is to the wider imagination. Where Emerson advises you to "hitch your wagon to a star," Franklin is ready with an improved axle-grease for the wheels. Franklin declares that honesty is the best policy; and Emerson insists on honesty as the only means whereby a man may be free to undertake higher things. Self-reliance was at the core of the doctrine of each of them, but one urged self-help in the material world and the other in the spiritual. Hopeful they were, both of them, and kindly, and shrewd; and in the making of the American people, in the training and in the guidance of this immense population, no two men have done more than these two sons of New England.—BRANDER MATTHEWS, *An Introduction to the Study of American Literature*, chap. viii.

Exercise 32

Point out comparisons and contrasts in the following selections. Note here and elsewhere the use of words and phrases like "but," "however," "yet," "still," "nevertheless," "notwithstanding," "on the other hand," "on the contrary," and so on, which are frequently employed in drawing contrasts. Note the position they occupy in the sentence in which they stand, use the dictionary to distinguish between them as to meaning and strength, and make use of such of them as you can in your own contrast work:—

SMOKELESS POWDER IN BATTLE

The use of smokeless powder in battle takes off about all that is left of romance and poetry in battle. It is like a play without scenery. It is the actors unmasked and half dressed and all that in

the dirty green room. The smoke of cannon in the old days lay along the grass for hundreds of feet after the shot had passed, and then it began slowly to rise up as if alive. Then it would thicken and drift slowly about and wait a reinforcement of smoke till the whole earth was gray and white and black with battle smoke. Only a few successive volleys from artillery and the curtain fell on the scene to rise no more on that act.

Now, boom! bang! rip! rattle! tear! Often three or four or five together or so close together that you can't say whether three or five or ten, and then it is a sort of ripping sound as if the air were being torn in two, crosswise and lengthwise at once. But the volume of sound does not seem greater by this added number of shots. Maybe a single big field-piece is the full capacity of the human ear. You begin to like it after a while, and you really feel half vexed when there comes a slacking off, as then the sound ceases, of course; and when the great guns stop entirely, as they must, and the rattle of small arms only is heard, you feel like hissing the actors off the stage. — JOAQUIN MILLER (Cincinnatus Heine Miller), *The Examiner* (San Francisco), Sept. 30, 1900.

THE LAMP OF REALITY¹

The novelist must ground his work in faithful study of human nature. There was a popular writer of romances, who, it was said, used to go round to the fashionable watering-places to pick up characters. That was better than nothing. There is another popular writer who, it seems, makes voluminous indices of men and things, and draws on them for his material. This also is better than nothing. For some writers, and writers dear to the circulating libraries too, might, for all that appears in their works, lie in bed all day, and write by night under the excitement of green tea. Creative art, I suppose

¹ "Ruskin has lighted seven lamps of Architecture to guide the steps of the architect in the worthy practice of his art. It seems time that lamps should be lighted to guide the steps of the writer of Fiction. Think what the influence of novelists now is, and how some of them use it! Think of the multitudes who read nothing but novels; and then look into the novels which they read! . . . If seven lamps have been lighted for Architecture, Scott will light as many for Fiction" (from the preceding paragraph).

they call this, and it is creative with a vengeance. Not so, Scott. The human nature which he paints, he has seen in all its phases, gentle and simple, in burgher and shepherd, Highlander, Lowlander, Borderer, and Islesman; he had come into close contact with it; he had opened it to himself by the talisman of his joyous and winning presence; he had studied it thoroughly with a clear eye and an all-embracing heart. When his scenes are laid in the past, he has honestly studied history. The history of his novels is perhaps not critically accurate, not up to the mark of our present knowledge, but in the main it is sound and true — sounder and more true than that of many professed historians, and even than that of his own historical works, in which he sometimes yields to prejudice, while in his novels he is lifted above it by his loyalty to his art. — GOLDWIN SMITH, *The Lamps of Fiction*.¹

AN EXPERIMENT IN BLOOD

A slight prick of the finger with a cambric-needle supplies a point, not a drop, of blood, which we spread on a slip of glass, cover with another much thinner piece of glass, and look at in the microscope. You see a vast number of flattened disks rolling round in a clear fluid, or piled in columns, like rouleaux of coin. Each of these is about one-fiftieth of the diameter of the dot over this *i*, or the *period* at the end of this sentence, as it will be seen in fine print. You have many millions of millions of them circulating in your body, — I am almost afraid to say how many by calculation. Here and there is a pearly looking globule, a little larger than one of the disks. These are the red and the white blood corpuscles, which are carried along by the pale fluid to which the red ones give its color, as the grains of sand are whirled along with a rapid torrent. The blood, then, you see, is not like red ink, but more like water with red and white currants, one of the latter to some hundreds of the former, floating in it, not dissolved in it. — HOLMES, *The Human Body and its Management*.

THE GAME OF EDUCATION

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or

¹ Note how the contrasting points are here gathered into two groups; in the paragraphs by Mr. Matthews (Section 19) they are made to alternate.

losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth, that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated — without haste, but without remorse. — Huxley, quoted in GENUNG's *Handbook of Rhetorical Analysis*, 68-70.

LIBERTY AND OBEDIENCE

I believe that we can nowhere find a better type of a perfectly free creature than in the common house fly. Nor free only, but brave; and irreverent to a degree which I think no human republican could by any philosophy exalt himself to. There is no courtesy in him; he does not care whether it is king or clown whom he teases; and in every step of his swift mechanical march, and in every pause of his resolute observation, there is one and the same expression of perfect egotism, perfect independence and self-confidence, and conviction of the world's having been made for flies. Strike at him with your hand; and to him, the mechanical fact and external aspect of the matter is, what to you it would be, if an acre of red clay, ten feet thick, tore itself up from the ground in one massive field, hovered over you in the air for a second, and came crashing down with an aim.

That is the external aspect of it; the inner aspect, to his fly's mind, is of quite natural and unimportant occurrence — one of the momentary conditions of his active life. He steps out of the way of your hand, and alights on the back of it. You cannot terrify him, nor govern him, nor persuade him, nor convince him. He has his own positive opinion on all matters; not an unwise one, usually, for his own ends; and will ask no advice of yours. He has no work to do — no tyrannical instinct to obey. The earthworm has his digging; the bee, her gathering and building; the spider, her cunning network; the ant, her treasury and accounts. All these are comparative slaves, or people of vulgar business. But your fly, free in the air, free in the chamber — a black incarnation of caprice — wandering, investigating, flitting, flirting, feasting at his will, with rich variety of choice in feast, from the heaped sweets in the grocer's window to those of the butcher's back-yard, and from the galled place on your cab-horse's back to the brown spot in the road, from which as the hoof disturbs him, he rises with angry republican buzz — what freedom is like his?

For captivity again, perhaps your poor watch-dog is as sorrowful a type as you will easily find. Mine certainly is. The day is lovely, but I must write this, and cannot go out with him. He is chained in the yard, because I do not like dogs in rooms, and the gardener does not like dogs in gardens. He has no books, nothing but his own weary thoughts for company, and a group of those free flies, whom he snaps at, with sullen ill success. Such dim hope as he may have that I may yet take him out with me, will be, hour by hour, wearily disappointed; or, worse, darkened at once into a leaden despair by an authoritative "No" — too well understood. His fidelity only seals his fate; if he would not watch for me, he would be sent away, and go hunting with some happier master; but he watches, and is wise, and faithful, and miserable: and his high animal intellect only gives him the wistful powers of wonder, and sorrow, and desire, and affection, which embitter his captivity! Yet of the two, would we rather be watch-dog, or fly?

Indeed, the first point we have all to determine is not how free we are, but what kind of creatures we are. It is of small importance to any of us whether we get liberty; but of the greatest that we deserve it. Whether we can win it, fate must determine; but that we may be worthy of it, we may ourselves determine; and the sorrowfulest



fate, of all that we can suffer, is to have it, *without* deserving it. — RUSKIN, *The Queen of the Air*.¹

Exercise 33

1. Compare (and contrast) a violet and a buttercup.
2. Compare an ant and a bee.
3. Contrast a moth and a butterfly. In 1, 2, and 3, write from your own observation only.

4. Place something under the microscope, study it, and then use comparison to make clear the results of your experiment. Take Holmes's paragraph (Exercise 32) as your model. Here are some simple objects for study with the microscope : —

Human hair; hair of cat, dog, horse, etc; striæ of muscular tissue; wing of fly; scales from wings of butterfly; foot of fly; cornea of fly's eye; parts of flowers — pollen, anthers, pistils, leaves, thin sections of stems and roots; hairs of plants; stagnant water; wings of insects; crystals of common salt; fabrics — linen, cotton, and silk; frog's foot; starch granules; stinger of bee; point of needle; edge of razor; etc.

5. CLASS EXERCISE: Compare (or contrast) the objects named below with things more or less like them. Try to bring out in a sentence or two the pith of the resemblance or difference: —

picture	clock	winter	squirrel
spider	cupboard	coffin	thimble
silk	clover	roadside	fields
attic	library	toast	poster
tent	ladder	ticket	pocket
crow	vase	earth	claws
postmark	tadpole	soapsuds	blackberry
woodchuck	wood-grape	eye	tongue
apple	forge	roots	snowdrift
meadow	stubble	woods	pump

¹ These paragraphs show how examples may be used in contrast; see Section 20. Ruskin's notion of liberty is further brought out in the paragraph on *Liberty and Restraint*, Exercise 34.

6. Is there any topographical feature about your home that you can compare to some familiar object?

Take Stevenson's paragraph (Section 18) as your model. The battlefield of Waterloo has been described as a capital A laid on the ground (Hugo, *Les Misérables*, chap. lxviii); Ancient Attica as "a confined triangle" (Newman, *Historical Sketches*, vol. iii); Byzantium, when it acquired the name of Constantinople, as "an unequal triangle" (Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xvii); the front of an army as an extended fan, "the sticks being represented by regiments strung out along the line of route" (Kipling, *The Courtship of Dinah Shadd*); French America as having two heads, — "one among the snows of Canada, and one among the cane-brakes of Louisiana" (Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*); Manchester Buildings as "an eel-pot, which has no outlet but its awkward mouth — a case-bottle which has no thoroughfare, and a short and narrow neck" (Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby*, chap. xvi).

7. Supply the omitted comparison in the following paragraph; not the comparison of the author, of course, because you may not know that, but a comparison of your own which you think will fit the facts stated.

Very wise men, and very wary and inquisitive, walk over the earth, and are ignorant not only what minerals lie beneath, but what herbs and foliage they are treading. Some time afterward, and probably some distant time, a specimen of ore is extracted and exhibited; then another; lastly the bearing and diameter of the vein are observed and measured. Thus it is with . . . — LANDOR.

8. Try to complete the following comparison. When you have finished your work, compare it with the original, which you will find in Holmes's *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (Library edition), 185-187.¹

¹ When, in your reading, you come upon a paragraph that develops an apt comparison or contrast, write down some portion of it, as in 7 and 8 above, and lay it aside until you have forgotten the exact words of the author. Then complete it, and compare what you have written with what the author wrote. In this way you will discover some of your faults and correct them.

Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of Resurrection. Tic-tac! tic-tac! go the wheels of thought; we cannot stop them; . . .

9. Write a paragraph on one of the following subjects, in which you develop your subject-sentence by means of contrast. Before doing so, however, see what is said at the beginning of the preceding exercise about the connecting words and phrases used in drawing contrasts:—

1. Boating and cycling (or any other two sports).
2. Two portraits of Napoleon; one taken in youth and the other in age. (Consult any illustrated life of Napoleon, and tell what you yourself see in the two pictures of your choice.)
3. Portia and Lady Macbeth. (This for those only who have read with some care *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth*.)
4. The harbor in a fog and on a clear day.
5. Learning to skate and learning to ride a wheel.
6. Haying and corn-husking.
7. Studying a lesson with and without help.

10. Write a paragraph on one of the following subjects, in which you develop your subject-sentence by means of comparison proper:—

1. A crowded street.
2. A good book.
3. The face of Lincoln. (Study some portrait of Lincoln, and try to trace his character in his face.)
4. A wise saw.
5. The wearing of birds in hats.
6. Picking apples.
7. Sweet cider and doughnuts.
8. King's excuse.
9. A foot-path way.

The pine wood loves a clean floor. Grasses and sedges, with all bushes, it frowns upon as a model houskeeper frowns upon dirt. A plain brown carpet suits it best, with a modest figure of green — pref-

erably of evergreen — woven into it; a tracery of partridge-berry vine, or it may be of club moss with here and there a tuft of pipsissewa and pyrola. — BRADFORD TORREY.

SECTION 20

Construction of Paragraphs

5. BY TELLING ABOUT ONE OF A NUMBER OF THINGS: EXAMPLE

Let us suppose that you wish to develop a subject-sentence something like this: "When, however, the story is not vouched for by a proper name, the probability is that the successive reappearances of an anecdote are due to a survival in oral tradition." There are several methods to develop such a sentence, some of which have already been explained. One method is to illustrate it by example; that is, instead of telling all the stories you know to explain what you mean by the statement made in your subject-sentence, you choose some one of them, and tell that as a sample of the others. In other words, you tell about one of a number of things, instead of telling about each and all. The method of example is used in the following paragraph: —

LET THE OTHER MAN WALK!

When, however, the story is not vouched for by a proper name, the probability is that the successive reappearances of an anecdote are due to a survival in oral tradition. [Example.] There is in America a familiar tale, summed up in the phrase, "Let the other man walk!" It relates that a traveller in a hotel was kept awake long past midnight by a steady tramp, tramp, tramp, on the floor over him. At last he went upstairs and asked what the matter might be. The occupant of the upper room said that he owed money to another man for which he had given a note, and the note came due on the morrow and he could not meet it. "Are you certain that you cannot pay your debt?" asked the visitor. "Alas, I cannot," replied the debtor.

"Then," said the visitor, "if it cannot be helped, lie down and go to sleep—and let the other man walk!" Now this is a mere Americanization of a story of Poggio's of an inhabitant of Perugia, who walked in melancholy because he could not pay his debts. "Vah, stulte," was the advice given him, "leave anxiety to your creditors!" —BRANDER MATTHEWS, *On the Antiquity of Jest*s.

Examples and comparisons are a good antiseptic for the prevention of dullness, for they will keep thinking and writing sweet when nothing else will. If, as you write, they occur to you easily, and in numbers, you may be quite sure that you know well the thing you are writing about; but if, on the contrary, they must be sought after, and are found only after much search, you may be just as sure that you have still some thinking to do before you are ready to go on with your writing. To choose good examples, you must put yourself in the place of your readers, and realize their thoughts and feelings on reading what you write. Choose your examples from such objects as are likely to be familiar to your readers, and try to select such examples as will most strikingly and accurately illustrate—and enliven—what you have to explain. A single good example is always better than many poor ones.

Exercise 34

Point out the examples in the following selections, and discuss their appropriateness and effectiveness:—

DIVISION OF LABOR

To take an example, therefore, from a very trifling manufacture, but one in which the division of labor has been very often taken notice of, the trade of the pinmaker; a workman not educated to this business (which the division of labor has rendered a distinct trade), nor acquainted with the use of the machinery employed in it (to the invention of which the same division of labor has probably

given occasion), could scarce, perhaps, with his utmost industry, make one pin in a day, and certainly could not make twenty. But in the way in which this business is now carried on, not only the whole work is a particular trade, but it is divided into a number of branches, of which the greater part are likewise peculiar trades. One man draws out the wire, another straightens it, a third cuts it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head; to make the head requires two or three distinct operations; to put it on is a peculiar business; to whiten the pins is another; it is even a trade by itself to put them into the paper; and the important business of making a pin is, in this manner, divided into about eighteen distinct operations, which, in some manufactories, are all performed by distinct hands, though in others the same man will sometimes perform two or three of them. I have seen a small manufactory of this kind where ten men only were employed, and where some of them consequently performed two or three distinct operations. But though they were very poor, and therefore but indifferently accommodated with the necessary machinery, they could, when they exerted themselves, make among them about twelve pounds of pins in a day. There are in a pound upwards of four thousand pins of a middling size. Those ten persons, therefore, could make among them upwards of forty-eight thousand pins a day. Each person, therefore, making a tenth part of forty-eight thousand pins, might be considered as making four thousand eight hundred pins in a day. But if they had all wrought separately and independently, and without any of them having been educated to this particular business, they certainly could not each of them have made twenty, perhaps not one pin in a day; that is, certainly, not the two hundred and fortieth, perhaps not the four thousand eight hundredth part of what they are at present capable of performing, in consequence of a proper division and combination of their different operations. — ADAM SMITH, *Wealth of Nations*, chap. i.¹

¹ Adam Smith's book was first published in 1775-1776, and his statements should be compared with those made by United States Consul Schoenhoff in a report on technical education to the United States State Department (1888): "In pinmaking the coil of brass wire is put in its proper place, the end fastened, and the almost human piece of mechanism, with its iron fingers, does the rest of the work. One machine makes

LIBERTY AND RESTRAINT

Wise laws and just restraints are to a noble nation not chains, but chain mail — strength and defence, though something, also, of an incumbrance. And this necessity of restraint, remember, is just as honorable to man as the necessity of labor. You hear every day greater numbers of foolish people speaking about liberty, as if it were an honorable thing; so far from being that, it is, on the whole, and in the broadest sense, dishonorable, and an attribute of the lower creatures. No human being, however great and powerful, was ever so free as a fish. There is always something that he must or must not do; while the fish may do whatever he likes. All the kingdoms of the world put together are not half so large as the sea, and all the railroads and wheels that ever were, or will be invented, are not so easy as fins. You will find, on fairly thinking of it, that it is his Restraint which is honorable to man, not his Liberty; and, what is more, it is restraint which is honorable even in the lower animals. A butterfly is much more free than a bee; but you honor the bee more, just because it is subject to certain laws which fit it for orderly function in bee society. And throughout the world, of the two abstract things, liberty and restraint, restraint is always the more honorable. It is true, indeed, that in these and all other matters you never can reason finally from the abstraction, for both liberty and restraint are good when they are nobly chosen, and both are bad when they are basely chosen; but of the two, I repeat, it is restraint which characterizes the higher creature, and betters the lower creature: and, from the ministering of the archangel to the labor of the insect, — from the poisoning of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust, — the power and glory of all creatures, and all matter, consist in their obedience, not in their freedom. The Sun has no liberty —

180 pins a minute, cutting the wire, flattening the heads, sharpening the points, and dropping the pin in its proper place. One hundred and eight thousand pins a day is the output of one machine. A factory visited by me employed seventy machines. These had a combined output per day of 7,500,000 pins, or three hundred pins to the paper, 25,000 papers of pins; allowing for stoppages and necessary time for repairs, say 20,000 papers. These machines are tended by three men. A machinist with a boy-helper attends to the repairing."

a dead leaf has much. The dust of which you are formed has no liberty. Its liberty will come — with its corruption. — *RUSKIN, The Two Paths*, sec. 192.

THE NATURAL AFFECTION OF ANIMALS

The more I reflect on the *στοργή* [natural affection] of animals, the more I am astonished at its effects. Nor is the violence of this affection more wonderful than the shortness of its duration. Thus every hen is in her turn the virago of the yard, in proportion to the helplessness of her brood, and will fly in the face of a dog or a sow in defence of those chickens, which in a few weeks she will drive before her with relentless cruelty.

This affection sublimates the passions, quickens the invention, and sharpens the sagacity of the brute creation. Thus the hen, just become a mother, is no longer that placid bird she used to be, but with feathers standing on end, wings hovering, and clogging note, she runs about like one possessed. Dams will throw themselves in the way of greatest danger in order to avert it from their progeny. Thus a partridge will tumble along before a sportsman in order to draw away the dogs from her helpless covey. In the time of nidification the most feeble birds will assault the most rapacious. All the hirundines of a village are up in arms at the sight of a hawk, whom they will persecute till he leaves that district. A very exact observer has often remarked that a pair of ravens nesting in the rock of Gibraltar, would suffer no vulture or eagle to rest near their station, but would drive them from the hill with amazing fury; even the blue thrush at the season of breeding would dart out from the clefts of the rocks to chase away the kestrel, or the sparrow-hawk. If you stand near the nest of a bird that has young, she will not be induced to betray them by an inadvertent fondness, but will wait about at a distance with meat in her mouth for an hour together.

The fly-catcher of the "Zoölogy" (the *Stoparola* of Ray) builds every year in the vines that grow on the walls of my house. A pair of these little birds had one year inadvertently placed their nest on a naked bough, perhaps in a shady time, not being aware of the inconvenience that followed. But a hot sunny season coming on before the brood was half fledged, the reflection of the wall became insupportable, and must inevitably have destroyed the tender young, had not

affection suggested an expedient, and prompted the parent birds to hover over the nest all the hotter hours, while with wings expanded, and mouths gaping for breath, they screened off the heat from their suffering offspring.

A farther instance I once saw of notable sagacity in a willow-wren, which had built in a bank in my fields. This bird a friend and myself had observed as she sat in her nest, but were particularly careful not to disturb her, though we saw she eyed us with some degree of jealousy. Some days after, as we passed that way, we were desirous of remarking how this brood went on, but no nest could be found, till I happened to take a large bundle of long green moss, as it were, carelessly thrown over the nest in order to dodge the eye of any impertinent intruder. — WHITE, *Natural History of Selborne*.¹

TRAINING THE EYE

The eye is susceptible of more training than perhaps any other of the senses. Fineness of sight, length of vision, comprehensiveness, or the number of things taken in at once, and rapidity, — these may be so far developed that the educated eye is as far above the uneducated as a refined and cultivated mind is beyond a savage one. Houdin, the great French necromancer, relates the practice of himself and son in preparing for one part of their jugglery. They trained their eyes to take in at a glance, from a shop window, from a store full of varieties, from the face of books in a library, the greatest number of things. They came to such perfection that in simply walking past a library case they could afterward tell you nearly every book on its shelves, and its relative position. Their eyes seemed to be acted upon in a manner not unlike the photographic process. A picture was instantly formed. And afterward, it rose up before their memories as if the original thing stood before them. Such incidents show how little use is yet made of eyes, and how little we suspect their capabilities of education. — HENRY WARD BEECHER.

¹ A great many nature books have been recently published, and in these can be found any number of paragraphs containing examples and specific instances which illustrate facts about our familiar birds and animals similar to that so interestingly treated by White.

Exercise 35

1. Bring to class a paragraph containing a single example; another containing several examples. Can you discover any rule for the arrangement of two or more examples in a paragraph? Has climax anything to do with the matter?

2. Give an example of your own to illustrate each subject developed in Exercise 34.

3. After you have had time to study one of the following subjects at first hand, illustrate it by specific examples:—

1. The habits of the English sparrow.
2. The preparation of the apple tree for winter.
3. The hawk and owl as birds of prey.
4. How the robin builds its nest.
5. How seeds are scattered by the wind. (Observe the dandelion, maple, elm, linden, ash, thistle, etc.)
6. How seeds are scattered by animals and men. (Study the burdock, hound's-tongue, tick-trefoil, beggar-ticks, enchanter's night-shade, etc.)
7. The metamorphosis of insects. (Collect cocoons of moths, butterflies, etc., and watch development.)
8. Insect and flower. (How the insect assists in the fertilization of the flower, and how the flower furnishes nectar as food for the insect.)
9. Gnawing habits of the squirrel, woodchuck, or rat.
10. Burrowing habits of the mole.
11. The harm done by insects. (For example, by rose-beetles, grain-weevils, flies, mosquitoes, fleas, tent-caterpillars, elm-leaf beetles, grasshoppers, locusts, squash-bugs, red ants, etc.)
12. Usefulness of insects. (Dragon-flies, burying-beetles, ichneumon-flies, white-faced hornet, paper-wasp, etc.)

4. Write a paragraph on one of the following subjects, developing your subject-sentence by means of examples:—

1. The fads of fashion.
2. A private lesson from a bulldog.
3. How to make a dull boy read.
4. The common "hop-toad's" mode of life.
5. The value of a common school education.
6. A bicyclist's opinion of — road (some road you know).
7. The strange tricks memory plays us.
8. Some observations on changes in the color of leaves.

SECTION 21

Construction of Paragraphs

6. BY TELLING A THING IN MORE THAN ONE WAY: RESTATEMENT

In oral discourse, where one thought slips away as soon as another takes its place, it is often necessary to say a thing four or five times over before it can be lastingly impressed on the mind. The cleverest speaker, other things being equal, is he who continually repeats himself, at each repetition giving some new turn to his thought. So adept was Pitt in the art of restatement that Lord Stanhope once said of him, "He knew that to the multitude one argument stated in five different forms is, in general, equal to five new arguments." And this is true—in general; that is, when the restatements are so skillfully made as to produce the illusion of originality. In written discourse, where the reader may go over what he reads as often as he please, the principle of restatement also holds good, but to a less extent. Here, as in oral discourse, an important statement, if it is to produce conviction, cannot be allowed to stand alone. A thing must be looked at from different points of view. It must be set before the reader in different lights. If a thought

has been stated in abstract, it may be restated in figure or in concrete; if it has been stated with conciseness, it may be restated with some diffuseness — it will be all the clearer; a new form may give it more definiteness, more familiarity, more terseness, more breadth. The restatement, in brief, should in some way enlarge the thought — it is the idea that is restated, and not the words that are repeated. To do this is to tell a thing in more than one way.

The method is illustrated by the following paragraph. The subject-sentence, "One is tempted to say that the most human plants, after all, are the weeds," would hardly be understood if standing by itself. Its central idea, the humanness of weeds, is therefore restated, but with a new turn of thought, in sentences two and three, where we have the added thought about what weeds do that is human; it is restated once more in sentence four, where we have the added thought about why weeds win our affection. Few paragraphs are constructed by any one method, and from this point on to the close of the paragraph example is made greater use of than restatement. But even in this latter half of the paragraph some ideas are restated. The central idea of the subject-sentence is restated in "what a homely human look they have;" "they are an integral part of every old homestead" is restated in "your smart new place," etc.; "one comes to regard them with positive affection" is restated in "how kindly one comes to look upon it;" and the first clause of the last sentence is restated in the last clause of that sentence — but in all of these restatements some new turn is given the thought, whereby it becomes more clear and definite. Even the words — "cling," "follow," "crowd,"

"throng," "jostle," "override," and the like—help in this process of restatement, help to show the human quality of weeds, for they are just the words we should use in speaking of persons.

THE HUMANNESSE OF WEEDS

[Subject-sentence.] One is tempted to say that the most human plants, after all, are the weeds. [Restatements.] How they cling to man and follow him around the world, and spring up wherever he sets his foot! How they crowd around his barns and dwellings, and throng his garden and jostle and override each other in their strife to be near him! Some of them are so domestic and familiar, and so harmless withal, that one comes to regard them with positive affection. [Examples.] Motherwort, catnip, plantain, tansy, wild mustard—what a homely human look they have! they are an integral part of every old homestead. Your smart new place will wait long before they draw near it. Our knot-grass, that carpets every old door-yard, and fringes every walk, and softens every path that knows the feet of children, or that leads to the spring, or to the garden, or to the barn, how kindly one comes to look upon it! Examine it with a pocket glass and see how wonderfully beautiful and exquisite are its tiny blossoms. It loves the human foot, and when the path or the place is long disused other plants usurp the ground.—JOHN BURROUGHS, *A Bunch of Herbs*.

Exercise 36

Show how restatement is used in the following selection, which is an extract from the argument made by Webster at the trial of John Francis Knapp for the murder of Joseph White, of Salem, in Essex County, Massachusetts, on the night of the 6th of April, 1830:—

THE MURDERER AND HIS SECRET

BY DANIEL WEBSTER

Gentlemen, it is a most extraordinary case. In some respects, it has hardly a precedent anywhere; certainly none in our New Eng-

land history. This bloody drama exhibited no suddenly excited, ungovernable rage. The actors in it were not surprised by any lion-like temptation springing upon their virtue, and overcoming it, before resistance could begin. Nor did they do the deed to glut savage vengeance, or satiate long-settled and deadly hate. It was a cool, calculating, money-making murder. It was all "hire and salary, not revenge." It was the weighing of money against life; the counting out of so many pieces of silver against so many ounces of blood.

An aged man, without an enemy in the world, in his own house, and in his own bed, is made the victim of a butcherly murder, for mere pay. Truly, here is a new lesson for painters and poets. Whoever shall hereafter draw the portrait of murder, if he will show it as it has been exhibited, where such example was last to have been looked for, in the very bosom of our New England society, let him not give it the grim visage of Moloch, the brow knitted by revenge, the face black with settled hate, and the bloodshot eye emitting livid fires of malice. Let him draw, rather, a decorous, smooth-faced, bloodless demon; a picture in repose, rather than in action; not so much an example of human nature in its depravity, and in its paroxysms of crime, as an infernal being, a fiend, in the ordinary display and development of his character.

The deed was executed with a degree of self-possession and steadiness equal to the wickedness with which it was planned. The circumstances now clearly in evidence spread out the whole scene before us. Deep sleep had fallen on the destined victim, and on all beneath his roof. A healthful old man to whom sleep was sweet, the first sound slumbers of the night held him in their soft but strong embrace. The assassin enters, through the window already prepared, into an unoccupied apartment. With noiseless foot he paces the lonely hall, half lighted by the moon; he winds up the ascent of the stairs, and reaches the door of the chamber. Of this he moves the lock, by soft and continued pressure, till it turns on its hinges without noise; and he enters, and beholds his victim before him. The room is uncommonly open to the admission of light. The face of the innocent sleeper is turned from the murderer, and the beams of the moon, resting on the gray locks of his aged temple, show him where to strike. The fatal blow is given! and the victim passes, without a struggle or a motion, from the repose of sleep to the repose

of death! It is the assassin's purpose to make sure work; and he plies the dagger, though it is obvious that life has been destroyed by the blow of the bludgeon. He even raises the aged arm, that he may not fail in his aim at the heart, and replaces it again over the wounds of the poniard! To finish the picture, he explores the wrist for the pulse! He feels for it, and ascertains that it beats no longer! It is accomplished. The deed is done. He retreats, retraces his steps to the window, passes out through it as he came in, and escapes. He has done the murder. No eye has seen him, no ear has heard him. The secret is his own, and it is safe!

Ah! gentlemen, that was a dreadful mistake. Such a secret can be safe nowhere. The whole creation of God has neither nook nor corner where the guilty can bestow it, and say it is safe. Not to speak of that eye which pierces through all disguises, and beholds everything as in the splendor of noon, such secrets of guilt are never safe from detection, even by men. True it is, generally speaking, that "murder will out." True it is, that Providence hath so ordained, and doth so govern things, that those who break the great law of Heaven by shedding man's blood seldom succeed in avoiding discovery. Especially in a case exciting so much attention as this, discovery must come, and will come, sooner or later. A thousand eyes turn at once to explore every man, every thing, every circumstance, connected with the time and place; a thousand ears catch every whisper; a thousand excited minds intensely dwell on the scene, shedding all their light, and ready to kindle the slightest circumstance into a blaze of discovery. Meantime the guilty soul cannot keep its own secret. It is false to itself; or rather it feels an irresistible impulse of conscience to be true to itself. It labors under its guilty possession, and knows not what to do with it. The human heart was not made for the residence of such an inhabitant. It finds itself preyed on by a torment, which it dares not acknowledge to God or man. A vulture is devouring it, and it can ask no sympathy or assistance, either from heaven or earth. The secret which the murderer possesses soon comes to possess him; and, like the evil spirits of which we read, it overcomes him, and leads him whithersoever it will. He feels it beating at his heart, rising to his throat, and demanding disclosure. He thinks the whole world sees it in his face, reads it in his eyes, and almost hears its workings in the very silence

of his thoughts. It has become his master. It betrays his discretion, it breaks down his courage, it conquers his prudence. When suspicions from without begin to embarrass him, and the net of circumstance to entangle him, the fatal secret struggles with still greater violence to burst forth. It must be confessed, it will be confessed; there is no refuge from confession but suicide, and suicide is confession.

Exercise 37

1. Write a paragraph in which you develop one of the following subject-sentences by means of restatement, bearing in mind that each restatement must be a real addition to your paragraph : —

1. A newsboy has to endure many hardships.
2. Map-drawing is an invaluable aid in learning geography.
3. Hepzibah's life was a pathetic one. (Read Hawthorne's *The House of Seven Gables*.)
4. Monday is a more desirable holiday than Saturday.
5. Patriotism should be cultivated in the public schools. (What is meant by patriotism; how it can be cultivated in the public schools; reverence for the stars and stripes; singing of patriotic songs; reading of heroic deeds; studying lives of great Americans; effect on life outside of school — reverence for and obedience to laws, help to good citizenship, inspiration for defence of country in time of war.)

2. Write a paragraph describing Millet's "Angelus," in which you develop the subject-sentence by means of restatement. The picture can be had for a penny or so from art companies that sell cheap reproductions of famous pictures.

HELPS TO STUDY: Study the man and the woman. Of what country are they? Of what class of people? How do you know this? What have they been working at? Why are they not working now? What is the meaning of "Angelus"? What does the attitude of the woman show? Of her hands? Of her head? What of the expression of her face? What does the attitude of the man show? Of his

hands? Of his head? Where is his hat? Why? Is there as much feeling shown in the man's attitude as in the woman's? Why should there be this difference? What in the picture makes you see this difference? What do you see in the background of the picture to the right? Why has it been put so far in the distance? Why did not the artist put more people into his painting? Why not more attractive scenery? What meaning has the wheelbarrow with the two bags of potatoes in it, the one full and the other only partly full? Why is the basket only partly full? Why is the fork stuck in the ground? Now, what is the meaning of the picture as a whole? What message has it brought you?

SECTION 22

Essentials of the Paragraph

1. IT SHOULD HAVE ONE CENTRAL IDEA : UNITY

The essentials of the paragraph are three : —

1. It should have one central idea : Unity.
2. Its chief parts should readily catch the eye : Mass.
3. It should read smoothly : Coherence.

In the first of these essentials you have already had some practice, because you could not well write many single paragraphs, after the method set in this book, without consciously or unconsciously learning more or less about how to make a paragraph with one central idea. You will do well now, however, to look at the matter somewhat more particularly.

Perhaps Franklin's paragraph about the wharf and the borrowed stones (Section 59) will serve as well as any to show what is meant by the statement that a paragraph should have one central idea — that it should observe the principle of unity. Turn to Franklin's paragraph, read it, and then close your book and examine your mental

impression. Franklin has given a clear and vivid account of a rather trifling incident in his life, and he has done this so well that you recall easily enough, when you close the book, every detail in his story. More vivid than anything else, probably, is the point of his story, that nothing is useful which is not honest. This is the one central idea of his paragraph, about which all other details are grouped. The paragraph, we say, has unity, and, because it has unity, makes but one clear impression on the mind, and this after all is the real reason why paragraphs should have unity at all. But how did Franklin get this unity into his paragraph? Evidently by using only those details that could be grouped about the one central idea, which we may suppose he stated to himself in some such fashion as this: "An incident in my life that convinced me that nothing is useful that is not honest." This central idea Franklin no doubt determined before ever putting pen to paper, and, with it as his guide, he could have no difficulty in deciding what to put into his paragraph, and what to leave out.

And this is the secret of unity. Fix in your mind the one central idea of the paragraph you are to write,—which you can most easily do by choosing an appropriate subject and by writing your subject-sentence,—and then determine, before you set about writing, just what you will put into your paragraph. Put into it no detail that is not needed to develop your subject-sentence, and omit none that is, for unity requires the right selection of the right material. If, after you have written your paragraph, you can state its substance in a single sentence,¹ you may be

¹ The substance of a paragraph can often enough be suggested by a single word or a phrase, but most well-written paragraphs in explanation

quite sure that it has unity, that it will make its one clear impression on the mind of your reader.

Two cautions : Paragraphs often lack unity because they tell too much, and sometimes they lack unity because they tell too little. Try the experiment of adding some irrelevant detail to Franklin's paragraph. Put in near the close a sentence or two about his father's age, his business, or his home, and note the effect. The paragraph now has no central idea, and therefore fails to produce the impression of oneness that before made it so perfect. Or, on the other hand, leave out a sentence or two, anywhere in the paragraph, and note the effect. Again the paragraph fails to give the impression of unity, but this time because it tells too little.

Exercise 38

1. Rewrite the following selection, combining the paragraphs so as to give them unity. The lack of unity in this selection is due to the irritating habit newspaper men have of attempting to make every sentence or so emphatic by setting it off as a new paragraph : —

“Employ your time well.”

Here Mr. Rothschild appears to have indulged in something of a wide generalization. The advice is good, but it needs defining. Good employment of time for one man might be bad employment for another.

A poet should, perhaps, study Russian, to read in the original the marvellous modern productions of Russian genius. But a man in the wheat pit ought to study crop reports, and let the Russian language go.

and argument, and many even in narration and description, will stand the test here given. What is said here, and elsewhere in this chapter, about the paragraph, is of course meant to apply particularly to the paragraph in explanation, which is taken as the type of discourse.

Perhaps an acceptable definition of "Wise employment of time" would be as follows:—

Devote your very best hours, those in which you have most vitality, to the business which occupies you; that is to say, the business on which your material prosperity depends. With your brain at its best, keep your mind on your business. In addition to that get enough fresh air and exercise to keep your body in good shape. Do enough good reading to keep your brain growing. The brain must be fed as the body is fed. Putting good books into the brain is exactly the same process as putting good corn into an ox.

Try to get contrasts in your life, and into your mental work, thus avoiding stagnation. Darwin used to stop studying earthworms or facial expression to read the most trifling fairy stories. They rested him. — *American newspaper*.

2. Find five paragraphs in this book that have unity. State the substance of each in a single sentence.

3. Find two paragraphs in some other book that have unity, and state the substance of each in a single sentence.

4. Find the central idea in two narrative paragraphs; in two descriptive paragraphs.

5. Rewrite two of your own paragraphs, giving them greater unity.

6. **CLASS EXERCISE:** Make clippings from the newspapers of paragraphs wanting unity (as in 1 above), mount them on cards or heavy paper so they can be used several times, and give a clipping to each member of the class, requiring the paragraphs to be rewritten with due attention to unity.

7. On one of the following subjects plan a theme of four or five paragraphs, stating in as many sentences the substance of each paragraph:—

1. My favorite wild flower.
2. The travelling library.
3. Uncas, the last of the Mohicans.

4. My friend the grocer.
5. How maple sugar is made.
6. A booth at the fair.
7. When the bees swarm.
8. Thoughts on opening a letter.

SECTION 23

Essentials of the Paragraph

2. ITS CHIEF PARTS SHOULD READILY CATCH THE EYE: MASS¹

The chief parts of a paragraph should be so placed as readily to catch the eye of the reader. Chief ideas, that is, should have chief places. Now, in every paragraph there are two places that most readily catch the reader's eye, the beginning and the end, or, to be more precise, the first part of the opening sentence and the last part of the closing sentence, and it is a law of thought that ideas stated at the beginning or at the end of a paragraph, or both, will receive the reader's most lively attention, and be longest remembered. Matter so placed will have the greatest emphasis. The model paragraph introduces its subject in the first sentence, explains it in the sentences between the first and the last, and concludes it in the final sentence. The reader understands the central portion of the paragraph, and remembers the ideas at the beginning and at the end. It is quite obvious, therefore, that if the chief ideas of a paragraph are to have the emphasis they deserve, they should be put in those places that are fittest for them, the beginning and the end of the paragraph.

The test of the mass of a paragraph is pretty much like the test of the unity of a paragraph, except that it is a bit

¹ See Wendell, *English Composition*, pp. 126-134, and Index.

more severe. The test of the unity of a paragraph, you have found, is whether you can sum up its substance in a single sentence. The test of the mass of a paragraph is whether you can sum up its substance in a single sentence, taking for the subject of the sentence the substance of the first sentence of the paragraph, and for the predicate, the substance of the last sentence of the paragraph.

It sometimes happens that a paragraph is so well massed that you can take for the subject of the summarizing sentence the subject of the first sentence of the paragraph, and for the predicate, the predicate of the last sentence of the paragraph, both without change. In this manner, for example, you can sum up the substance of the two paragraphs I have just written : —

1. The chief parts of a paragraph | should be put in those places that are fittest for them, the beginning and the end of the paragraph.

2. The test of the mass of a paragraph | is whether you can sum up its substance in a single sentence, taking for the subject of the sentence the substance of the first sentence of the paragraph, and for the predicate, the substance of the last sentence of the paragraph.

In like manner, also, you can sum up the substance of this paragraph by Macaulay : —

A POOR EDITION

This work has greatly disappointed us. Whatever faults we may have been prepared to find in it, we fully expected that it would be a valuable addition to English literature; that it would contain many curious facts, and many judicious remarks; that the style of the notes would be neat, clear, and precise; and that the typographical execution would be, as in new editions of classical works it ought to be, almost faultless. We are sorry to be obliged to say that the merits of Mr. Croker's performance are on a par with a certain leg of mutton on which Dr. Johnson dined, while travelling from London to Oxford, and which he, with characteristic energy, pronounced to be "as bad

as could be; ill fed, ill killed, ill kept, and ill dressed." This edition is ill compiled, ill arranged, ill written, and ill printed. — MACAULAY, *Croker's Edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

Here is the summary :—

This work | is ill composed, ill arranged, ill written, and ill printed.

Exercise 39

1. Apply 2, 3, 5, and 6, Exercise 38, to the mass of paragraphs.

2. Apply to some well-written essay, almost anything by Macaulay or Burke will do, the test described in Section 23.

3. On one of the following subjects write a well-massed paragraph. One way to do this is to place your subject-sentence at the beginning of the paragraph, to develop it in the sentences between the first and the last, and to state it in another form at the close of the paragraph. Your first sentence may be short, and have the air of introducing your subject, and your last sentence may be somewhat longer, and have the air of taking leave of your subject. Do not write all your paragraphs in this fashion, for there is always more or less variety in the structure of good paragraphs :—

1. Why I like to look through catalogues.
2. A pumpkin vine, and what came of it.
3. A hornet's nest (with drawing).
4. A hundred-years-old coin (watch, tea-pot, pitcher, etc.).
5. Thoughts about an old photograph album.
6. A walk in the rain.
7. Things that happen at our back door.
8. A safe investment for small sums of money (be definite and practical).
9. General Grant's last battle (his final illness and heroic struggle with Death).

10. An amusing street-car advertisement.
11. The origin of the song, *My Maryland*. (See Matthews, *Pen and Ink*.)
12. Should a story teach a moral?

SECTION 24

Essentials of the Paragraph

3. IT SHOULD READ SMOOTHLY: COHERENCE

A paragraph should read smoothly. To read smoothly, it must observe the principle of coherence. Now coherence requires all that unity requires, and more. It requires not only that a paragraph shall tell neither too much nor too little, but also that the sentences in a paragraph shall be so firmly welded together as to leave no doubt as to their mutual relation. In other words, coherence requires that every sentence shall be so constructed and so placed as to seem to grow naturally out of the sentence that precedes, and into the sentence that follows — like a section in a bamboo stalk. This smoothes the reader's passage from sentence to sentence.

The means of securing coherence in paragraphs are chiefly two: —

(1) Keep together matters that are closely connected in thought, and keep apart matters that are distinct in thought. Logical thinking will do this for you, but that comes with mental maturity. Perhaps a carefully prepared outline will help you as much as any one thing at this stage, since in that, and in the arrangement of material in general, you have already had some practice.

(2) Use connecting words and phrases wherever they are needed to make your meaning clear. A glance at

almost any well-written paragraph will show you how essential are connectives to make clear the relation of one sentence to another. Such words as "then," "further," "moreover," "however," "nevertheless," "therefore," "hence," "on the contrary," "on the other hand," "in short," "in a word," and the many similar expressions, are the guide-posts that a clear thinker sets up, at every turn in the road, for the direction of the reader. These words, and others like them, should be easily at your command, ready to be used as needed.¹

Exercise 40

1. Connecting words and phrases are so helpful in giving coherence to paragraphs that I give below several lists of those most used.² With the help of a dictionary, study the precise meaning of at least the most important, and make use of such of them as are needed in your future work. Look through some book of essays, or the selections quoted in this book, and see how many you can find in actual use. Though all may be used to refer to a preceding sentence, many do not stand at the beginning of the sentence in which they are used, but are frequently preceded by a word or a phrase, and sometimes even by a clause : —

To add a statement having the same bearing as those that precede :
And,³ also, yea, likewise, so, similarly, in like manner, first, secondly,

¹ Paragraph coherence depends largely also on certain essentials of the sentence, especially on sentence effectiveness, coherence, and unity, for a discussion of which see Chapter III.

² These lists are taken from Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric* (enlarged edition), vol. ii, where much useful information will be found about explicit reference in paragraphs.

³ "And" and "but" are rarely used at the beginning of a sentence.

etc., again, besides, then, too (following another word), further, moreover, furthermore, add to this, yet another, once more.

To restrict in some way what has already been stated: But,¹ but then, still, yet, only, nevertheless, notwithstanding, however, at the same time, for all that.

To indicate an effect or consequence: Therefore, wherefore, hence, whence, consequently, accordingly, thus, so, then, so then, so that, how much more.

To state opposition or negation: On the contrary (negation), contrariwise, on the other hand (for an alternative), conversely, obversely (look up the strict logical meaning of these last two).

To return after a digression: To return, to proceed, to resume.

To sum up: In short, in brief, in a word, in one sentence, on the whole, to conclude, in conclusion, to sum up, to recapitulate.

To make a transition to a new line of remark: Hitherto, up to this point, so far, thus far.

To make a special reference to a preceding sentence: In this case, in that case, that being so, in these circumstances, in the manner described, by such proceedings as have been detailed, under the foregoing arrangement, after what has now been said, not that all men are so affected.

To repeat: In other words, it comes to the same thing, this is equal to saying, to vary the statement, we have now seen, we have already stated, as has just been said, it was formerly laid down, it was remarked above.

To explain: In point of fact, the explanation is, we account for that fact, etc.

2. Rewrite two of your paragraphs, giving them greater coherence.

Some books say they should never be so used, but that is mere pedantry, since instances of such use can be found in the works of reputable authors. There is a tendency among inexperienced writers, however, to use these two connectives pretty much at random, and it is therefore a good general rule to use no more "ands" and "buts" than you can help. They do for language what the signs + and - do for numbers, and it is just as wrong to use them for other more pertinent connectives as it would be in numbers to use the signs + and - for $\times$ and $\div$.

¹ See foot-note 3, page 114.

when out of place, mistimed, or bursting forth from a disordered state of feeling, may be the most terrible modulation of the human voice. The laughter of one asleep, even if it be a little child, — the madman's laugh, — the wild, screaming laugh of a born idiot, — are sounds that we sometimes tremble to hear, and would always willingly forget. Poets have imagined no utterance of fiends or hobgoblins so fearfully appropriate as a laugh. And even the obtuse lime-burner felt his nerves shaken, as this strange man looked inward at his own heart, and burst into laughter that rolled away into the night, and was indistinctly reverberated among the hills. — HAWTHORNE, *Ethan Brand*.

Observe how easily obvious the paragraph relations are made by means of the words in italics, which, in several of the examples, indicate only the chief references. Thus, phrases like "Though they dwelt in such a solitude," "The roll of the drum," "To that morning," "a priest," "though a new constitution was not needed," and "Laughter,"¹ "echo" either the thought or the wording of matter in the closing sentence of a preceding paragraph. This device gives the subject-sentence in each fresh paragraph a backward turn, while a forward turn is insured by the mere nature and position of the subject-sentence.

So-called connectives, such as those listed in Exercise 40, do no small part of this work of making easily obvious the mutual relation of paragraphs. In the sentences quoted from Hawthorne and Macaulay, for example, you find the words "such," "these," "that," "however," and "but," and, with a little hunting, you would come upon many more. Some of these you would find within the subject-sentence, as those just quoted, and some without, as those in paragraphs whose subject-sentences happen to be altogether omitted or placed elsewhere than at the beginning. Connectives, you have already learned, are to

¹ "Laughter" goes echoing through the whole paragraph.

be used with precision, being, as they are, quite distinct in use and meaning. Thus, some connectives, of which "such" is one, are capable, when used to bind paragraphs together, only of referring to matter in a preceding paragraph, while others, of which "however" is one, are capable of indicating as well the direction to be taken by the thought of the paragraph in which they stand. The latter sort may be conveniently used to show whether a new paragraph adds to the force of a preceding paragraph, or whether it restricts or refutes it. Two more matters should be thought of: first, that it is more pleasant to use a connective in the body than at the beginning of a sentence, especially where the sentence stands at the head of a paragraph;¹ second, that the antecedent of a demonstrative pronoun² is commonly repeated with the pronoun, — "that *morning*," "these *people*," — where there is a chance of misapplying the reference.

Sometimes, however, neither subject-sentence looking before and after nor isolated connective is needed to bind paragraphs together. This often happens in stories and descriptions, and sometimes even in explanations and arguments, where the sequence of thought is so natural and so evident as to leave no shadow of doubt as to the mutual relation of the paragraphs.

Exercise 41

1. Find ten subject-sentences like those described in the third paragraph of Section 25.

¹ A half-hour with almost any modern author will convince you of this; for some statistics see Sherman's *Analytics of Literature*, chap. xxvi.

² With the demonstrative pronouns "this" and "that," may be classed any word that resembles them in use, as "some," "such," "other," "few," "many," and the like.

2. Find ten paragraphs bound together by connecting words or phrases not standing in subject-sentences.

3. CLASS EXERCISE: Study the subject of binding paragraphs together in connection with some well-constructed essay or speech. Something by Hawthorne, Macaulay, or Burke will do. Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*, if not too difficult, is the best that can be chosen. In particular, if Burke's speech is read, the eight paragraphs in which he treats of the temper and character of the American people deserve the most careful study. They not only show how paragraphs should be bound together, but they prove as well that clear, logical thinking is necessary to perfect coherence, and that no amount of connectives will redeem thinking which in itself does not proceed along the lines of correct reasoning. Burke used many connectives, but he had back of his connectives clear and sound thought.

4. On a subject of your own choosing, but approved by your instructor, write a theme of several paragraphs, binding your paragraphs together by the means described in Section 25.

Exercise 42

THE SLIDE

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

. . . But while they spoke softly, . . . the wind through the Notch¹ took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strain of the spirits of the blast, who in old

¹ The people of the story are seated about a cottage hearth in the Notch of the White Hills. The cottage is a sort of primitive tavern, located in a cold and dangerous spot, but right in the way of mountain travel between Maine, on the one side, and the Green Mountains and the shores of the St. Lawrence, on the other.

Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness. The light hovered about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the children, peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien, the high-browed youth,¹ the budding girl, and the good old grandam, still knitting in the warmest place. The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

"Old folks have their notions," said she, "as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning, and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a-wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for, when she can go but a step or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you."

"What is it, mother?" cried the husband and wife at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her grave-clothes some years before, — a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding day. But this evening an old superstition had strangely recurred to her. It used to be said, in her younger days, that if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse in the coffin and beneath the clods would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

"Don't talk so, grandmother!" said the girl, shuddering.

"Now," — continued the old woman, with singular earnestness, yet smiling strangely at her own folly, — "I want one of you, my children — when your mother is dressed and in the coffin — I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all's right?"

"Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments," murmured the stranger youth. "I wonder how mariners feel when the ship

¹ The ambitious guest.

is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean — that wide and nameless sepulchre?"

For a moment, the old woman's ghastly conception so engrossed the minds of her hearers that a sound abroad in the night, rising like the roar of a blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house and all within it trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance, or power to move. Then the same shriek burst simultaneously from all their lips.

"The Slide! The Slide!"

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage, and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot — where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! they had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain, in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the house, the stream broke into two branches — shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of the great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

HELPS TO STUDY: *The Ambitious Guest*, from which the above incident is taken, is one of Hawthorne's finest tales. Read the whole story (you will find it in *Twice-Told Tales*), and be prepared to tell it to the class. What is the meaning of the story? What, in the present selection, do the short paragraphs do? The long paragraphs? What detail is most firmly fixed in your mind? Why was it not put in a long paragraph? Where does the language flow most smoothly? What speeches seem most like real talk? Are they long or short? Rewrite paragraphs 2, 3, and 4; also 6 and 7. Make two paragraphs of the matter in these five paragraphs, and change to the third person, after the fashion of paragraph 4. Read the story, making your paragraphs a part of it. Why are Hawthorne's short paragraphs better than your long paragraphs?

SECTION 26

Length of Paragraphs

Hawthorne has shown you that paragraphs in a well-written story vary in length; a good essayist will show you that paragraphs in a well-written essay likewise vary in length, though not to the same extent. An extended examination of the works of the best story-tellers and essayists would doubtless show you that paragraph length depends somewhat upon a writer's habits of thought, somewhat upon the subject written on, and somewhat upon the peculiar effect to be produced. Variety in paragraph length there always is in good writing of any sort. In striving for this needed variety in paragraph length, it is well to remember that the average length of paragraphs is probably somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred and fifty words, and that paragraphs of four hundred words or more may be said to be unduly long, just as paragraphs of one hundred words or less may be said to be unduly short. If you avoid the common fault of making too many very short paragraphs, and follow the natural divisions of your theme subject, it is more than likely that you will have little difficulty in this matter of the length of paragraphs in a composition made up of two or more paragraphs.

Hawthorne has shown you also that certain effects can be produced by very short paragraphs, and that certain other effects can be produced by paragraphs considerably longer, — when the two sorts of paragraphs are used in conjunction. Thus, by putting a very short paragraph between two paragraphs considerably longer, he fixes our attention and memory upon the shriek of the victims,

"The Slide! The Slide!" In general, it may be said that a long succession of either very short paragraphs or very long paragraphs wearies the reader by its monotony. The two sorts of paragraphs are almost always best used in conjunction, though it is true that a succession of short paragraphs, if not too extended, gives a rapidity of movement, especially to a story, that cannot be had by any other means; and it is also true that several long paragraphs in succession, if not too long, give an impression of power that short paragraphs do not give. But the peculiar value of both short and long paragraphs, like that of a good many other things, depends upon sparing use. Used in conjunction with long paragraphs, the short paragraph, by drawing attention to the thought it contains, emphasizes that thought, and long paragraphs, when used with short paragraphs, add grace and dignity to style. Clearness and directness come from the use of short paragraphs.

Exercise 43

1. Copy some paragraph in this book of about two hundred and fifty words, which, as we have seen, is a paragraph of average length, and then count the number of words on each page of your manuscript. This will enable you to tell how many words you write to the page, and how many such pages it takes for a paragraph of average length. Paragraphs on the written page look much longer than they do on the printed page, a fact that sometimes betrays young writers into making their paragraphs unduly short. Try, therefore, to give a reason for the length of each paragraph you write.

2. Find the average length of the paragraphs on the first page of to-day's paper. Also on the editorial page.

Is there any difference in length between the two? How do you account for the difference? Are the paragraphs as long as they are in your school history? How do you account for the difference?

3. Look up several of the following chapters in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, and observe the effect of long successions of very short paragraphs: liii, xci, cxviii, cxix, cxlix, cclxvii, cclxxvii. Find instances of the use of short and long paragraphs in conjunction; in this connection, read chapters xxxvii (effect of last paragraph? An exquisite touch), xlv (last paragraph), lxxviii (last paragraph), cclxxx (shortest paragraph). See Justin H. McCarthy, *Our Sensation Novel*, for a clever burlesque on the extreme to which French writers carry the use of the short paragraph.

4. Long paragraphs in abundance can be found in the works of almost any prose writer of the time of Richard Hooker (1553-1600). If a particular work is wanted, later and more easily accessible, read De Quincey's *Revolt of the Tartars*. Note especially the long paragraph beginning with the following sentence: "The lake of Tengis, near the dreadful desert of Kobi," etc. In this paragraph De Quincey reaches the climax of his powerful imaginative effort, which, as a whole, is one of the most grandly conceived and best sustained pieces of vivid historical painting in the English language. Notes and suggestions for study can be found in almost any school edition of the essay. Barrow and Hunter's edition (George Bell & Sons, London) is as complete as any I know of.

Exercise 44

1. Bring to the class room some book you like, some book of essays or of short stories, or some novel, and be prepared to read and explain at least one introductory paragraph in it. State the method used, whether figure, story, quotation, etc. How does the introduction suggest the sort of essay or book it introduces? Do you think any other method would have been as effective?

2. Find one introductory paragraph beginning with a quotation; find one beginning with an anecdote; find one beginning with a figure of speech; find one which is quite formal.

3. From your school history select some narrative in which the author has made a good beginning. Bring your book to class, and be prepared to explain why the beginning is a good one. Do the same with some introductory paragraph in one of your text-books in science or literature.

4. Revise the introduction to some long theme you have recently written.

Exercise 45

1. Apply 1, 3, and 4, Exercise 44, to concluding paragraphs.

2. Find three or four concluding paragraphs that seem to you to illustrate as many different kinds of conclusions.

3. Find a well-told anecdote. How is the point of the story brought out? Is the moral stated at the close?

4. Read a half-dozen or so fables. How do they end?

5. Study the concluding and introductory paragraphs in Lincoln's *Second Inaugural Address* (Exercise 25).

PART II
WRITING AND REWRITING

PLANNING, WRITING, AND REWRITING

AT the very outset of your study of the paragraph, you learned that the paragraph lends itself easily to the art of composition, and that if the principles of its construction are once thoroughly understood, there can be no real difficulty to overcome in the putting of paragraphs together in the whole composition. This matter you have just put to a practical test.¹ As the sentence holds the same general relation to the paragraph that the paragraph holds to the whole composition, you might therefore infer that if the principles of sentence structure were once thoroughly understood, there would be no real difficulty in the putting of sentences together in paragraphs. This, however, is not the case. The paragraph is a unit of composition in a sense that the sentence is not. No one ever learned to write by the composition of innumerable detached sentences, although it is nevertheless true that a feeling for the rhythm and flexibility of the sentence is essential to style in writing. But this feeling for the rhythm and flexibility of the sentence, this sentence sense, as it may be called, does not come from the conscious building up of sentences in imitation of certain well-formed models. It comes, aside from inherent power of intellect and feeling, from the rapid writing that always accompanies the outpouring of copious stores of wisdom, and from slow, careful, conscious rewriting of sentences

¹ In Sections 25-27 and the accompanying exercises.

written at white heat, and written without thought of kind or form. No one whose mind is wholly possessed by the desire to write something, and who also has something to write — and no one else ought ever to write anything — ever stops to think of the sort of sentences he is writing; indeed, no one can, in the midst of actual composition, stop to think of the sort of sentences he is writing without at the same time losing the naturalness and enthusiasm that come from knowing what one wants to write and from writing it swiftly. What you do with sentences, therefore, as well as what you do later on with words,¹ you will do in the way of rewriting.

This distinction between the paragraph and the sentence recalls the headings of Part I and Part II in this book, the first of which is "Planning and Writing," and the second, "Writing and Rewriting." These two convenient terms suggest the essence of the difference between the two parts. Part I has to do mainly with the work of planning; Part II has to do mainly with the work of rewriting. You plan your whole compositions and paragraphs before you write them, — hence the first term, "Planning and Writing"; you do not plan your sentences and words, but first write them, and then revise or rewrite them, — hence the second term, "Writing and Rewriting."

¹ See Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

THE SENTENCE

SECTION 28

What a Sentence Is

A SENTENCE may be defined as "a word or a group of words capable of expressing a complete thought or meaning."¹ "The dew" and "on the rose," although each is a group of words, are not sentences, because they are not capable, at least in their present forms, of expressing a complete thought or meaning. "The dew is on the rose," however, is a sentence, because it is a group of words expressing a complete thought. Every sentence, you know from your study of grammar, must have a subject and a predicate, one of which may sometimes be merely understood, and both of which may be modified by words, phrases, or clauses, and extended in complex and compound forms.

But this understanding of a sentence will not carry you far in the writing of good English sentences. You have now to learn that a sentence may satisfy every requirement of the definition just quoted, and yet make bad English. If you write, "Place an ordinary college man in a position inferior to that of a non-college man, and he will quickly overtake him and soon pass him by," you break no rule of

¹ Sweet, *A New English Grammar*, vol. i, sec. 447.

grammar. Yet you do not make clear to me what you started out to say, that it is the college man who quickly overtakes and soon passes by the non-college man. Your sentence, though it is grammatically correct, is really bad English, since it does not say what you meant it to say. If you write, "He makes gestures like a wind-blown scarecrow," you again break no rule of grammar. Yet you would show questionable veracity, and little discernment, were you to apply such a comparison to an accomplished lecturer. The sentences you are to write, then, are to be not only grammatically correct, but also rhetorically effective. They are to consist of "proper words in proper places."¹

Such a sentence should be distinguished by at least five essentials : —

1. It should be correct.
2. It should be clear.
3. It should be effective.
4. It should be coherent.
5. It should have unity.

Each of these essentials may profitably be discussed in a section by itself.

SECTION 29

Essentials of the Sentence

1. IT SHOULD BE CORRECT

Only a word need be said about correctness in sentences. To give here rules for correctness would be to repeat what you have already learned in grammar, whose most practical purpose is to teach the making of correct sentences.

¹ Swift's definition of a good style.

Though it is true that a sentence must be more than merely correct to be a good English sentence, it is just as true that a sentence must be correct before it can be either clear or effective or coherent or a unit. You begin to make good English sentences by first making them conform to the rules of grammar — to the rules of good usage as set by the practice of the best writers and speakers of our language. This book begins where grammar leaves off. It presupposes that your study of grammar was not study wasted. It presupposes that your study of grammar has enabled you, apart from such slips in language as all of us make now and then, to write English sentences that are at least correct.

NOTE. — A review of such principles of grammar as are most frequently violated may be helpful at this point. Some special matters may be mentioned: The article and its uses; formation of foreign and irregular plurals; formation and uses of the genitive (confine the genitive sign mainly to living beings); confusion of nominative and objective pronoun forms; misuse of adjectives for adverbs, and of adverbs for adjectives; concord (of subject and predicate, of adjective — or of participle — and noun, of pronoun and antecedent); sequence of tenses; the nature and constructions of infinitives and of participles; the abuse of the historical present; when to use the subjunctive mood; “shall” and “will”; “may” and “can,” “lie” and “lay,” “sit” and “set,” “rise” and “raise”; placing of modifiers (“only,” restrictive phrases, so-called split infinitive,¹ etc.); the use of adjective and of adverbial phrases and clauses; comparison of adjectives (dwell on the confusion of the comparative and the superlative); the use of correlative conjunctions; the omission of words necessary to the sense; and, in general, any matter in the analysis of the sentence which needs to be reviewed.

¹ The split infinitive is an awkward construction, and should in general be avoided. Occasionally, however, it can be effectively used to bring an adverb into an emphatic position; e.g. “I desire *to thoroughly understand* the matter.” Though violently attacked by purists, the construction is steadily gaining ground.

written at white heat, and written without thought of kind or form. No one whose mind is wholly possessed by the desire to write something, and who also has something to write — and no one else ought ever to write anything — ever stops to think of the sort of sentences he is writing ; indeed, no one can, in the midst of actual composition, stop to think of the sort of sentences he is writing without at the same time losing the naturalness and enthusiasm that come from knowing what one wants to write and from writing it swiftly. What you do with sentences, therefore, as well as what you do later on with words,¹ you will do in the way of rewriting.

This distinction between the paragraph and the sentence recalls the headings of Part I and Part II in this book, the first of which is "Planning and Writing," and the second, "Writing and Rewriting." These two convenient terms suggest the essence of the difference between the two parts. Part I has to do mainly with the work of planning ; Part II has to do mainly with the work of rewriting. You plan your whole compositions and paragraphs before you write them, — hence the first term, "Planning and Writing"; you do not plan your sentences and words, but first write them, and then revise or rewrite them, — hence the second term, "Writing and Rewriting."

¹ See Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

THE SENTENCE

SECTION 28

What a Sentence Is

A SENTENCE may be defined as "a word or a group of words capable of expressing a complete thought or meaning."¹ "The dew" and "on the rose," although each is a group of words, are not sentences, because they are not capable, at least in their present forms, of expressing a complete thought or meaning. "The dew is on the rose," however, is a sentence, because it is a group of words expressing a complete thought. Every sentence, you know from your study of grammar, must have a subject and a predicate, one of which may sometimes be merely understood, and both of which may be modified by words, phrases, or clauses, and extended in complex and compound forms.

But this understanding of a sentence will not carry you far in the writing of good English sentences. You have now to learn that a sentence may satisfy every requirement of the definition just quoted, and yet make bad English. If you write, "Place an ordinary college man in a position inferior to that of a non-college man, and he will quickly overtake him and soon pass him by," you break no rule of

¹ Sweet, *A New English Grammar*, vol. i, sec. 447.

grammar. Yet you do not make clear to me what you started out to say, that it is the college man who quickly overtakes and soon passes by the non-college man. Your sentence, though it is grammatically correct, is really bad English, since it does not say what you meant it to say. If you write, "He makes gestures like a wind-blown scarecrow," you again break no rule of grammar. Yet you would show questionable veracity, and little discernment, were you to apply such a comparison to an accomplished lecturer. The sentences you are to write, then, are to be not only grammatically correct, but also rhetorically effective. They are to consist of "proper words in proper places."¹

Such a sentence should be distinguished by at least five essentials : —

1. It should be correct.
2. It should be clear.
3. It should be effective.
4. It should be coherent.
5. It should have unity.

Each of these essentials may profitably be discussed in a section by itself.

SECTION 29

Essentials of the Sentence

1. IT SHOULD BE CORRECT

Only a word need be said about correctness in sentences. To give here rules for correctness would be to repeat what you have already learned in grammar, whose most practical purpose is to teach the making of correct sentences.

¹ Swift's definition of a good style.

Though it is true that a sentence must be more than merely correct to be a good English sentence, it is just as true that a sentence must be correct before it can be either clear or effective or coherent or a unit. You begin to make good English sentences by first making them conform to the rules of grammar — to the rules of good usage as set by the practice of the best writers and speakers of our language. This book begins where grammar leaves off. It presupposes that your study of grammar was not study wasted. It presupposes that your study of grammar has enabled you, apart from such slips in language as all of us make now and then, to write English sentences that are at least correct.

NOTE. — A review of such principles of grammar as are most frequently violated may be helpful at this point. Some special matters may be mentioned: The article and its uses; formation of foreign and irregular plurals; formation and uses of the genitive (confine the genitive sign mainly to living beings); confusion of nominative and objective pronoun forms; misuse of adjectives for adverbs, and of adverbs for adjectives; concord (of subject and predicate, of adjective — or of participle — and noun, of pronoun and antecedent); sequence of tenses; the nature and constructions of infinitives and of participles; the abuse of the historical present; when to use the subjunctive mood; “shall” and “will”; “may” and “can,” “lie” and “lay,” “sit” and “set,” “rise” and “raise”; placing of modifiers (“only,” restrictive phrases, so-called split infinitive,¹ etc.); the use of adjective and of adverbial phrases and clauses; comparison of adjectives (dwell on the confusion of the comparative and the superlative); the use of correlative conjunctions; the omission of words necessary to the sense; and, in general, any matter in the analysis of the sentence which needs to be reviewed.

¹ The split infinitive is an awkward construction, and should in general be avoided. Occasionally, however, it can be effectively used to bring an adverb into an emphatic position; e.g. “I desire *to thoroughly understand* the matter.” Though violently attacked by purists, the construction is steadily gaining ground.



SECTION 30

Essentials of the Sentence

2. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR

If a sentence is correct, it conforms to the usage of the best writers and speakers of our language; if it is clear, it says to the reader instantly what it says to the writer; if it is effective, it says this in an impressive way; if it is coherent, it reads smoothly, and its parts "stick together"; if it has unity, it has but one central idea. Each essential of the sentence aids each other essential. If you write a correct sentence, your sentence is more than likely to have at least some degree of clearness, of effectiveness, of coherence, and of unity. And so it is with each other essential. Of these five essentials, correctness and clearness are to be sought after first of all; effectiveness, coherence, and unity, only after correctness and clearness have been obtained. If any one of the five is of supreme importance, it undoubtedly is clearness. The end of language is to enable you to communicate your thoughts to others, and without clearness you are powerless to do so. There are times in the lives of all when it is of utmost importance that certain thoughts be communicated to others; whether correctly or effectively, or coherently, or with unity, does not so much matter as that they be communicated. It is a matter within the observation of all, moreover, that uneducated and unrefined people frequently happen to express their thoughts clearly and sometimes even effectively, in incorrect English. Their example, of course, is not to be imitated, but it nevertheless illustrates the supremeness of clearness.

If a sentence is clear, — to repeat what was said at the beginning of this section, — it says to the reader instantly what it says to the writer. From such a sentence the reader gets but a single meaning, which is the same meaning the writer put into it, and he gets this meaning at once and without effort. If the reader is forced, by a misused word or by some faulty construction, to puzzle over the meaning of a sentence, and if he comes to a full understanding of it only after some study, be it ever so little, that sentence lacks clearness. This lack of clearness may be due to one or to both of two fundamental faults: The fault of obscurity, which prevents a meaning from being readily seen, and the fault of ambiguity, which admits of two or more meanings, and thus leaves the reader in doubt as to the writer's precise meaning.

SOME RULES FOR CLEARNESS¹

(1) Do not attempt to express yourself in language before you thoroughly know your own meaning.²

(2) Be precise in your use of words.³

(3) Leave no doubt as to the antecedent of each pronoun. As a pronoun is a word used instead of a noun, the noun instead of which the pronoun is used should be the noun immediately preceding the pronoun. Repeat a noun rather than substitute for it a pronoun that will not suggest that noun at once and unmistakably.

[Bad.] John gave Thomas some money; *he* is very well off.

[Good.] John, *who* is very well off, gave Thomas some money.

[Bad.] Five other words occur to me which are commonly misused

¹ See Abbott's *How to Write Clearly*.

² Coleridge's suggestion; see *Lectures*, vol. iv, 337.

³ This matter is treated in Chapter IV.

by boys and girls. *These* are "fine," "lovely," "swell," "awful," and "horrible."

[Good.] Five other words occur to me which are commonly misused by boys and girls. *These words* are, etc.

(4) Make plain the connection between a participle and the noun or pronoun with which it belongs.

[Bad.] *Giving* two peaches to the boy, *he* asked for a third.

[Good.] *When I gave* two peaches to the boy, he asked for a third.

[Good.] *On my giving* two peaches to the boy, etc.

(5) Omit no word needed to make the meaning clear.

A black and white dog [= one parti-colored dog].

A black and a white dog [= two dogs, one black and one white].

The treasurer and secretary [= one person who holds two offices].

The treasurer and the secretary [= two persons].

[Bad.] "There is no difference," said the elm, "between the sap in our trunks and [^] the other trees of the forest."

[Good.] "There is no difference," said the elm, "between the sap in our trunks and *that in* the other trees of the forest."

[Bad.] I imagine _^ a lighted city, _^ from above, would hardly seem a city.

[Good.] I imagine *that* a lighted city *seen* from above would hardly seem a city.

[Good.] Gold and cotton, banks and railways, crowded ports and populous cities, — *these* are not the elements that constitute a great nation.

(6) Use no word not needed to make the meaning clear. Above all, use no word that will make the meaning obscure.¹

(7) Place words, phrases, and clauses as near as possible to the words or the groups of words with which they are grammatically connected.

[Properly placed adverbs.] He spoke *thoughtlessly*. Courage *always* enlists esteem. Courage has *always* enlisted esteem. He might *easily* have won success. He will be *utterly* undone.

¹ See Section 31.

Be careful of adverbs like "only," "solely," and of adverbial phrases like "at least," "at all events," "at any rate," etc. "Only" is properly placed immediately before the word affected by it.

He *only* beat three [= He did no more than beat, did not kill, three].

He beat *only* three [= He beat no more than three].

[Bad.] To picture simple human nature [^] was Wordsworth's theory
in simple everyday words.

[Good.] To picture simple human nature in simple everyday words
was Wordsworth's theory.

(8) Follow "not only . . . but also," "either . . . or,"
"neither . . . nor," "both . . . and," and the like, by the
same part of speech.

[Bad.] You should *not only* give your work [^] time, *but also* thought.

[Good.] You should give your work *not only* time, *but also* thought.

SECTION 31

Essentials of the Sentence

3. IT SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE

To be effective, a sentence must make some impression on the reader. A sentence may be correct, and even clear, and yet fail to make an impression. To make an impression on the reader, a sentence must in some way attract to itself the reader's attention. It must stir up the reader's emotions and imagination in such a way as to cause him to fix his mind on the thought of the sentence. Important and interesting matters should be put in specially effective sentences.

SOME RULES FOR EFFECTIVENESS

(1) Choose the word that will drive home your meaning. Prefer a short word to a long word, a specific word to a general word, a figurative word to a literal word.¹

¹ See Chapter IV.

(2) Be brief.

[Bad.] The boys *disputed and* quarrelled.

[Good.] The boys quarrelled.

[Bad.] *The language of some school themes is of such a nature that it does not arouse the reader's interest.*

[Good.] Some themes are dull.

(3) Place the chief parts of the sentence where they will readily catch the eye of the reader.

This is the principle of mass. In the sentence, as in the paragraph, there are two points that most readily catch the eye, the beginning and the end. Words placed at the beginning or at the end of a sentence have greater emphasis than if placed in the middle. Take an illustration:—

[Bad.] We derive the power to acquire territory by treaty and conquest from the constitution itself.

[Good.] The power to acquire territory by treaty and conquest we derive from the constitution.

In this sentence there are two important ideas, "the constitution" and "the power to acquire territory by treaty and conquest." Each of these ideas should be prominently placed, but in the sentence as originally written only one of them is so placed.

(4) Put out of its normal order any part of the sentence that needs special emphasis.

This method of gaining emphasis is especially adapted to the sentence, but it should be used with caution. By this method, a word, a phrase, or a clause is made conspicuous by being put out of its normal order. For example, an adjective, whose normal position is before its noun, may be emphasized by being placed after its noun; the subject and predicate may be emphasized by an inversion of their positions; a conditional clause, whose normal position is before its principal, may be emphasized by being placed after it; and so on with the other parts of the sentence, provided always that the English idiom is not sacrificed to get emphasis. The following sentences show how emphasis may be got by this method:—

FIRST FORM

The world needs *alert and active* men.

Do criminals rise *viciously and voluntarily* among us to lead hunted lives?

In the South Sea Islands they have a horror *for contagious diseases* as great as our horror of crime.

If you want to be well-to-do, make it a rule to do without everything you have not the cash to pay for.

SECOND FORM

The world needs men *alert and active*.

Do criminals *viciously and voluntarily* rise among us to lead hunted lives?

In the South Sea Islands they have *for contagious diseases* a horror as great as our horror of crime.

Make it a rule to do without everything you have not the cash to pay for, *if you want to be well-to-do*.

NOTE. — Other devices for effectiveness are the interrogative sentence (Section 34), the exclamatory sentence (Section 34), climax and antithesis (Section 37), and certain uses of the periodic sentence (Section 36).

SECTION 32

Essentials of the Sentence

4. IT SHOULD BE COHERENT

Coherence requires of the sentence pretty much what it requires of the paragraph. It requires that a sentence be so framed as to leave no doubt as to the mutual relation of all its parts. In other words, a sentence, if it is to have coherence, must be so framed that the relation of its words, phrases, or clauses to each other and to the sentence as a whole shall be so perfectly obvious as to be unmistakable.

SOME RULES FOR COHERENCE

(1) Keep together matters closely connected in thought; keep apart matters distinct in thought.

sentence; it belongs to each of the three classes of sentences. The first two classes are commonly written about in grammar, and the third, in rhetoric. But all three classes may profitably be considered here, since all have more or less to do with matters of taste and judgment.

The first class of sentences, however, may be dismissed with a word or two. Any boy or girl who has studied grammar can define a declarative, an interrogative, an imperative, or an exclamatory sentence. It is a different matter to know the comparative effectiveness of these sentences in written composition, and to put this knowledge to use in theme work. The following examples illustrate different uses of the least familiar of these sentences, and study of these examples will reveal the chief distinguishing features of each kind of sentence. In studying these examples, it may be well to change them about from one kind to another, and to determine whether loss or gain follows the changes: —

1. Honest labor bears an honest face.
2. What's in a name?
3. A drum, a drum!
 Macbeth doth come.
4. Hear the sledges with the bells, silver bells —
 What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
5. Hurrah! hurrah! Come here! It's perfectly splendid! You can see one — two — three — four — five — you can see seven different cascades!
6. The game is done! I've won! I've won!
7. Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
 Beloved from pole to pole!
8. Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from

evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. — 1611 Version.

9. Bah! That's the third umbrella gone since Christmas. What were you to do? Why, let him go home in the rain, to be sure. I'm very certain there was nothing about him that could spoil. Take cold? Indeed! He doesn't look like one of the sort to take cold. Besides, he'd better have taken cold than taken our umbrella. Do you hear the rain, Mr. Caudle? I say, DO YOU HEAR THE RAIN? And, as I'm alive, if it isn't Saint Swithin's Day! — DOUGLAS WILLIAM JERROLD, *Mrs. Caudle's Umbrella Lecture*.

SECTION 35

Kinds of Sentences

2. SIMPLE, COMPLEX, AND COMPOUND SENTENCES

Simple, complex, and compound sentences show a broader range of effects than do those we have just considered.

a. *Simple Sentences*. — The simple sentence makes only one statement; for example, (1) "The pond is frozen," (2) "The hills and the plain are white with snow," (3) "The snow is falling and drifting about the house," (4) "Snow and ice cover the lake and the river." Thus, in the simple sentence, there may be more than one subject (2), more than one predicate (3), or, in some cases, both (4).

The simple sentence is valued chiefly for its clearness and directness. This is due in part to the fact that it is commonly shorter than either the complex or the compound sentence, and in part to the fact that its subject and predicate, which express the most important ideas in the sentence, stand out more prominently than in the combined sentences. A short simple sentence may therefore be used, before or after or in the midst of several

sentence; it belongs to each of the three classes of sentences. The first two classes are commonly written about in grammar, and the third, in rhetoric. But all three classes may profitably be considered here, since all have more or less to do with matters of taste and judgment.

The first class of sentences, however, may be dismissed with a word or two. Any boy or girl who has studied grammar can define a declarative, an interrogative, an imperative, or an exclamatory sentence. It is a different matter to know the comparative effectiveness of these sentences in written composition, and to put this knowledge to use in theme work. The following examples illustrate different uses of the least familiar of these sentences, and study of these examples will reveal the chief distinguishing features of each kind of sentence. In studying these examples, it may be well to change them about from one kind to another, and to determine whether loss or gain follows the changes:—

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8. Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from

evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. — 1611 Version.

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SECTION 35

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long complex and compound sentences, to attract the reader's attention to an important thought. But simple sentences in unbroken succession, and unvaried in length and construction, are likely to tire the reader. They do so very often in newspaper reports, especially where there is any straining for effect, as in reports of thrilling accidents, and so on. Even in the first half of Macaulay's paragraph, quoted in Exercise 46, which abounds in simple sentences, and in which this form is perhaps shown at its best, there is a staccato effect that strikes the ear unpleasantly, an effect that in this case is no doubt partially due to the sentence length.

b. Complex Sentences.—The complex sentence makes one principal statement, and one or more statements that are dependent upon it for their meaning; for example, "Things are not what they seem," "Since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour" (FRANKLIN), "Write in your heart that every day is the best day in the year" (EMERSON).

Though the complex sentence is not ordinarily so clear and direct as the simple sentence, it is much more accurate. Not all our ideas are of equal importance. Some of them are of vastly greater importance than others, and most of them have more or less subtle relations among themselves. The complex sentence, if we are skilful in the handling of it, enables us to show the relative importance of our ideas, and to mark the precise relation of one idea to another. In Franklin's sentence, for example, "thou art not sure of a minute" is of less importance than "throw not away an hour." But the former statement is nevertheless closely related to the latter,—it gives Franklin's reason for saying "throw not away an hour,"

—and should therefore be put into the same sentence. “Since” and a comma,—the complex structure,—enabled Franklin not only to put these two statements into a single sentence, but also to show their precise relation and their comparative importance. Furthermore, a succession of complex sentences, from the very nature of their varied structure, can never be so tiresome as a succession of simple sentences. A superficial examination of the best pieces of prose writing, moreover, is enough to show that many of the most musical, of the most powerful, of the most sublime passages are written in complex sentences. Here again the sentence length, as we shall see later on, helps in producing the effect. In Lincoln’s *Gettysburg Address*,¹ however, in which the sentences are mainly complex, and in which, with the exception of the last, they are also short, the style is noble and elevated. On the other hand, the complex sentence is conducive to digressions, as in De Quincey’s works, and to over-looseness, as in Carlyle’s works.

c. Compound Sentences.—The compound sentence makes two or more statements of equal value; for example, “Truth needs not many words, but a false tale a large preamble,” “A nod for a wise man, and a rod for a fool,” “The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and who rest in unvisited tombs” (GEORGE ELIOT). These statements, as the examples show, may be either simple or complex, and are commonly connected by a coördinate conjunction.

¹ Quoted at p. 187.

The compound sentence needs little comment. If a compound sentence is composed of two or more simple statements, the effect is pretty much the same as that of the simple sentence; if it is composed of two or more complex statements, or of one simple statement and one or more complex statements, the effect is very nearly the same as that of the complex sentence. The tendency to join in a compound sentence thoughts that are not of equal value, or to join in a loose and haphazard way thoughts that are of equal value, is a common fault among inexperienced writers, and must be watched for and avoided.

Exercise 46

1. Determine whether the sentences in the following paragraph are simple, complex, or compound. Discuss the effect of each kind of sentence, being careful to note if the effect may not be due in part to the fact that the sentences are either long or short : —

AT THE TRIAL OF WARREN HASTINGS

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus; the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by heralds under Garter-King-at-Arms. The judges, in their vestments of state, attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy Lords, three-fourths of the Upper House, as the Upper House then was, walked in

solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. The junior baron present led the way—Lord Heathfield, recently ennobled for his memorable defence of Gibraltar against the fleets and armies of France and Spain. The long procession was closed by the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal of the realm, by the great dignitaries, and by the brothers and sons of the king. Last of all came the Prince of Wales, conspicuous by his fine person and noble bearing. The gray old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by such an audience as had rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous realm, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated around the queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the ambassadors of great kings and commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily against Verres; and when, before a senate which still had some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from the easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labors in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition—a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation; but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There, too, was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia, whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticised, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock hangings of Mrs. Montague. And here the ladies, whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against Palace and

SECTION 36

Kinds of Sentences

3. LOOSE¹ AND PERIODIC SENTENCES

a. Loose Sentences. — A loose sentence is one in which the meaning and grammatical structure are complete at one or more points before the end; as, "The road to success lies through many a thorny course, | across many a dreary stretch of desert land, | over many an obstacle, | from which the fainting heart is often tempted to turn back" (HENRY IRVING).

The loose sentence is a decided favorite with young writers, probably because it comes to them more easily than does the periodic sentence. This is doubtless because it resembles talk, or, to go a step farther back, because it resembles the natural process of thought. An idea flashes across the mind — it joins another and becomes a thought; but, as that thought is turned over and over in the mind, it is limited and extended in so many ways that its final and modified form is quite different from the form it took at the start. In the loose sentence, likewise, a statement is made, and then limited and extended in the statements that follow. It is for this reason that the loose sentence seems less formal and artificial than the periodic sentence, and is so well suited to the less formal kinds of writing, such as newspaper articles, letters, stories, and the like. Its peculiar merit, in short, is that it adds ease and naturalness to one's writing. Its unguarded use, however, is likely to lead to slipshod habits of writing — to the making of sentences, particularly of the beginnings and the

¹ "Loose" is not here a term of reproach. It is merely a convenient term for describing a variety of sentence structure.

5. Determine, by reviewing the paragraphs you have recently written, the kind of sentence you are most in the habit of using — whether simple, complex, or compound. Have you avoided all the faults mentioned in the last section?

6. On one of the following subjects write a paragraph, paying no attention whatever during actual composition to the kind of sentences you are using.¹ When you have done this, settle upon the effect you wish to produce, then reconstruct your sentences, making them simple, complex, or compound, as may seem best: —

1. A boy's tour of exploration.
2. Something about the mushroom.
3. An original bunny story.
4. The founder of Arbor Day (Dr. B. G. Northrop; see the *New England Magazine*, 22 : 269).
5. A package of old letters.
6. The passage of birds.
7. How a new census affects Congress.
8. A ride in a ferryboat.
9. On husking corn.
10. How insects emigrate (Colorado potato beetle, cabbage butterfly, wheat midge, codling moth, etc.).

¹The importance of this method cannot be overestimated. It has been emphasized, in one form or another, throughout this book, and by this time should be your best habit of composition. Write first at white heat, with your mind only on *what* you want to say, not on *how* you want to say it, and after that revise slowly, with your mind on how it is best to say what you have already said imperfectly and in haste. This is the one way to write at all times; especially is it the way to write, if you are to accomplish results worth while in this and the following chapters.

the authors who are noted for their periodic style use fewer periodic sentences than loose. This is probably due to the fact that they construct even their loose sentences in such a way as to give the greatest possible coherence, and to the fact also that many of their loose sentences produce the effect of the periodic sentence. Thus, the following sentence produces such an effect because the portion after the semicolon is periodic in structure: "Unfortunately, we have no record of the intercourse between Shakespeare and Burbage; but there can be little doubt that between the dramatist, who was himself an actor, and the actor who gave life to the greatest creations of his imagination, and who, probably, amazed no less than delighted the great master by the vividness and power of his impersonations, there must have existed a close friendship" (HENRY IRVING). The next sentence also, although strictly loose, is periodic in effect: "I may here add that the censure said to have been directed against Betterton for the introduction of scenery is the prototype of that cry, which we hear so often nowadays, against over-elaboration in the arrangements of the stage" (HENRY IRVING). Many similar examples might be quoted. To the young writer the foregoing facts teach this lesson: If you wish to have coherence in your writing, and coherence is the life-blood of good writing, use periodic sentences to some extent, and give to many of your loose sentences a partially periodic structure. Remember also the effect that can be produced by each kind of sentence, and if you find yourself inclined to use the loose sentence too much or too carelessly, as is quite likely to be the case, practise the use of the periodic sentence until you can and do use it frequently and with ease.

Exercise 47

1. Examine Lincoln's *Second Inaugural Address* (Exercise 25), and tell which sentences are loose, and which are periodic. Show where, in the loose sentences, the meaning and grammatical structure are complete before the end of the sentence. Show how, in the periodic sentences, the thought is suspended until the end of the sentence is reached; that is, point out all words, phrases, clauses, and all grammatical constructions of every sort, which, by requiring some thought to follow, suspend the meaning of the sentence.

2. Ascertain, by reviewing a sufficient number of the paragraphs you have written recently, whether you are in the habit of using the loose sentence too frequently or too carelessly. If you are, make a list of twenty of the most carelessly written loose sentences, and change them to periodic sentences. Here are some devices for suspending thought, which will help you in the work of rewriting loose sentences: —

In general, place the qualifying parts before the parts qualified.¹ The leading examples of such qualifying parts are: —

(1) Conditional clauses introduced by "if," "though," "however," "supposing that," "on condition that," "on the understanding that," and the like; as,

If you would know the value of money, go, try to borrow some!

(2) Subordinate clauses introduced by "when," "where," "while," "wherever," "whether," etc.; as,

Where you know nothing, place terrors.

(3) Clauses of reason introduced by "because," "for," "on account

¹ Most of the suggestions here given are adapted from Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric* (enlarged edition), vol. I.

of," "by reason of," "as," "since," "seeing that," "inasmuch as," "considering that"; as,

Since you will not save, you will not have wealth.

(4) Participial phrases; as,

Being weary they fell asleep.

(5) Adverbial phrases; as,

With all thy getting, get understanding.

The following couples aid in suspending thought: "Both . . . and"; "either . . . or"; "neither . . . nor"; "not . . . but"; "not only . . . but"; "that . . . which"; "it . . . that"; "the . . . that, which"; "so . . . as"; "as . . . as"; "so . . . that, but"; "such . . . as"; "more . . . than"; "rather . . . than"; "sufficient . . . to, for"; etc.; as,

He speaks *so* clearly *as* to be always understood.

Articles, comparatives, transitive verbs, phrases and clauses beginning with relative pronouns, etc., help to suspend thought.

3. On one of the following subjects write a paragraph, paying no attention whatever during actual composition to the kind of sentences you are using.¹ When you have finished the first draft, reconstruct your sentences, making them mainly loose or mainly periodic, or combining the two forms, according to the effect you wish to produce. And be sure to have some definite effect in mind, which it is worth while to try to produce; if you can think of none, talk the matter over with your instructor: —

1. When the circus comes to town.
2. A true bear story. (Perhaps one that your father has told you.)
3. What may happen in the next ten years. (Great inventions, etc.)
4. An old-fashioned school. (Get your mother or father to tell you about the schools they went to.)

¹ See the note to the last part of Exercise 46.

5. A wild animal I have known.
6. A "just-so" story. (See Kipling's works.)
7. What a living glacier is.
8. The electrical eel.
9. Should representatives in Congress vote according to their own convictions or as their constituents desire?
10. How to train for a five-mile run.
11. Lyddite shells.

SECTION 37

Balanced and Parallel Structures

Sentences may have the balanced or the parallel structure. There is some difference between the two. In the balanced structure two clauses dealing with ideas that are meant to be compared or contrasted are so constructed as to seem to be of equal weight. In the parallel structure, phrases, clauses, or sentences are made similar in length and grammatical construction in order to emphasize a parallelism of meaning. Thus, in the sentences that follow, sentence 1 is an example of the balanced structure, sentence 2 is an example of the parallel structure of phrases, sentence 3 is an example of the parallel structure of clauses, and sentences 4 are an example of the parallel structure of sentences.

1. You cannot have a landscape by Turner, without a country for him to paint; you cannot have a portrait by Titian, without a man to be portrayed (RUSKIN).

2. The great need in modern culture, which is scientific in method, rationalistic in spirit, and utilitarian in purpose, is to find some effective agency for cherishing within us the ideal (JOHN MORLEY).

3. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man (BACON).

4. We charge him [Charles I of England] with having broken his coronation oath; and we are told that he kept his marriage vow!

We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates; and the defence is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him! We censure him with having violated the articles of the Petition of Right, after having, for good and valuable consideration, promised to observe them; and we are informed that he was accustomed to hear prayers at six o'clock in the morning! (MACAULAY).

The merits of this sort of structure are that the regularity of form gives pleasure to the taste, while the position of the balanced and parallel parts adds clearness and coherence and effectiveness to the thought which they express. The method, however, lacks variety, and a too frequent use of it is likely to grow into a mannerism that is difficult to overcome. Hence, in the works of Johnson and Macaulay, where a great deal of balanced and parallel structure is found, the effect is sometimes monotonous and wearisome. Moreover, writers who become enamored with balanced and parallel forms occasionally distort their thought in order to make correct the balance or parallel of a sentence.

Here may be mentioned two structures closely akin to balanced and parallel structures, — antithesis and climax. The first of these, antithesis, is “the setting over against” each other of contrasted ideas or thoughts, generally in balanced structure. When Macaulay, for instance, says that “the Puritan hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators,” he sets one clause, “not because it gave pain to the bear,” over against another, “but because it gave pleasure to the spectators,” and thus, by means of antithesis, brings out clearly and effectively the difference between two contrasted thoughts. Black always seems blacker,

and white always seems whiter, when black and white stand side by side. The second structure to be mentioned here, climax (the Greek word means "ladder"), is the arrangement of words, phrases, or clauses with a view to a successive increase of force until the last. Indeed, sentences, and even paragraphs and whole compositions, may be made into climaxes. One of the most famous climaxes, now worn threadbare by quotation, is Cæsar's "thrasonical brag" of *Veni, vidi, vici*, which Shakspeare made fun of, and four times rendered "I came, saw, and overcame." Turn such a structure about, and you have an anticlimax, a thing to be avoided, unless it be used in the service of wit or humor. Both climax and antithesis, however, are, if used with moderation, helps to clearness and effectiveness.

Exercise 48

1. Point out the balanced and parallel structures in the following paragraphs: —

WHAT A POET SHOULD KNOW

Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw everything with a new purpose. My sphere of attention was suddenly magnified; no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful and whatever is dreadful must be familiar to his imagination; he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, the meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the enforcement of moral or religious truth, and he who knows

most will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction. — JOHNSON, *Rasselas*, chap. x.

NAPOLEON AND METTERNICH

That interview is surely one of the most memorable set down in human annals. On the one hand, Napoleon, a lion at bay, representing, in some fashion, a world-system destined to revolutionize Europe; on the other hand, Metternich, a fox, representing a world-system which but recently seemed hopelessly stricken, and now seems on the point of resurrection, — these are the speakers in the dialogue. The Lion storms, threatens, coaxes; the Fox listens calmly, almost disdainfully, calculating the strength of the trap into which his foe must fall. It is an eight-hours' parley between the Present, still confident of its superiority, and the Past, unexpectedly come back to life, and covetous of its former power. The Lion roars, but the Fox does not tremble; time was when the King of Beasts did not roar but strike, and now sound and fury signify nothing. Napoleon leads Metternich into an inner room, and shows him the map of Europe: Austria, he declares, shall have this compensation and that, if she but hold true to France; for France and Austria together may laugh at coalitions. Metternich is evasive, he promises nothing; he is already thinking how long it will take his army in Bohemia to march over to the allied camp. Napoleon appeals to the pride of the Hapsburgs: was it for nothing that he wedded the Austrian archduchess? Metternich replies that family considerations cannot interfere with his master's duty to his State. Napoleon in wrath flings his hat on the floor; Metternich, leaning imperturbably against a cabinet, does not condescend to pick it up; the Old Régime no longer fears the Revolution. — THAYER, *The Dawn of Italian Independence*, 127–128.

2. Pick out the antitheses in Franklin's *Father Abraham's Speech*, which you will find in some of your readers. Thus: —

1. Sloth makes all things difficult, but Industry all things easy.
2. Industry pays debts, while Despair increaseth them.
3. Etc., etc.

3. Pick out the climaxes in some act of *Julius Cæsar*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, or *Macbeth*.

4. Find ten sentences in your written work which you think would be improved by the balanced or parallel structure. Rewrite them, handing in the original sentences with the revised sentences.

5. On one of the following subjects write a paragraph, paying no attention during actual composition to the kind of sentence structure you are using. When you have finished the first draft, put as much balanced and parallel structure into the paragraph as is consistent with the subject-matter and your treatment of it:—

1. Two common insects; a contrast.
2. Boys now and boys forty years ago. (Get your father to talk about his boyhood days, and then draw the contrast.)
3. Girls now and girls forty years ago.
4. The blue jay and the common crow; a contrast.
5. Two birds' nests. (Eagles and hawks build platforms, bank swallows dig mines, robins and barn swallows are masons, woodpeckers are carpenters, orioles are weavers, etc., etc.)
6. Lincoln and Grant.

NOTE.—See the list of subjects in Exercise 33.

SECTION 38

Length of Sentences

The length of your sentences, as of your paragraphs, depends partly on your habits of thought, partly on your subject, and partly on the effect you wish to produce. If you were an absolute master of language, you would of course write naturally, and would thereby unconsciously suit the length of your sentences to your habits of thought, to your subject, and to the effect you would wish to pro-

duce. But unfortunately it is the most difficult thing in the world to write quite naturally, it is difficult even to seem to write naturally, and hence the power to adapt sentence length, as well as certain other things in writing, to thought, to subject, and to effect comes to most people only from study and practice. In sentence length, as well as in the kinds of sentences, variety is essential, and if you find yourself drifting towards the exclusive use of either very long or very short sentences, you should at once set about getting this needed variety. What a short sentence is, or what a long sentence is, it is difficult to say precisely, but perhaps it would not be far wrong to say that the average length of the sentences used by those who set the standard of good usage, is at the present time somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty words, and that a sentence much shorter than this may be called a short sentence, just as a sentence much longer than this may be called a long sentence. You should bear in mind the fact, also, that during the last four centuries the English sentence has been gradually decreasing in length, and that now there is a preference for the short sentence, or, at least, a preference for the sentence of average length.¹

The short sentence, because it is instantly and easily understood, and because, when used in connection with the long sentence, it becomes so prominent by reason of its shortness as to attract attention and thus fix itself in the memory of the reader, is best adapted for giving force

¹ See L. A. Sherman's *Analytics of Literature*, chap. xix, for some statistics that show the extent of this decrease in sentence length. In this connection, read also what Mr. Sherman has to say of the decrease of predication in sentences.

and emphasis to thought. It is for this reason that the short sentence can be used to such good advantage as the subject-sentence of a paragraph, and as the summary sentence of a paragraph, the sentence, that is, which sums up the thought of a paragraph, and which appears, if it appears at all, at the end of the paragraph. Short sentences following one another lose the individual prominence that comes from the contrast in sentence length, and can no longer be used to give force and emphasis to thought. A succession of short sentences, nevertheless, may produce other effects quite as desirable, such as swiftness of movement and intensity of passion in narration, and a rugged directness in other sorts of writing that may be both simple and natural. As it is not an easy matter to give coherence to a multitude of short sentences, a writer is sometimes betrayed by short sentences into a choppy, jerky style that is as unpleasant to a reader as the lumbering gait of a mob of ill-ordered long sentences.

The long sentence, since it leaves room for the expression of a thought together with its essential modifications, is superior to the short sentence for the unfolding of thought. A long sentence can therefore be used to advantage in explaining or in amplifying a thought stated in a preceding, or summarized in a following, short sentence. Long sentences in succession add dignity and impressiveness to matter, and a rhythm to writing, that make them well adapted for producing the higher effects of prose. Long sentences, however, require exceptional skill in handling, else they may result in an obscurity and an over-ponderousness that are illy suited both to the reader's understanding and to his entertainment.

Exercise 49

1. The following selections will give abundant material for the study of sentence length. Let the work be to point out the effects produced by short sentences standing by themselves, by long sentences standing by themselves, by successions of short and of long sentences, and by short and long sentences used in conjunction: Exercise 23 (second selection), Exercise 25, Section 14 (the short sentence as subject-sentence), Exercise 28 (first and last paragraphs), Exercise 32 (last selection), Exercise 36, and Exercise 42.

2. If you find among the paragraphs you have written one in which the sentences seem unduly short, rewrite it, increasing the sentence length. If you have written a paragraph in which the sentences seem unduly long, rewrite it likewise, decreasing the sentence length.

3. Choose one of the following subjects, and, after you have gathered your material, determine some effect you can produce by writing a paragraph of short sentences. Write the paragraph without paying any attention to sentence length, and then revise it with a view to the effect you wish to produce. Choose another subject from the list, and, using the same method as before, write a paragraph of long sentences. Choose a third subject from the list, and, still using the same method, write a paragraph in which you use both long and short sentences : —

1. A cyclist's camping outfit. (Tell what you would take with you on a cycling and camping-out trip.)

2. The autobiography of a second-hand book.

3. Lining up for the start.

4. Moving sidewalks for cities.

5. When trains run one hundred and fifty miles an hour. (This speed has already been attained in Germany by an electric motor.)

6. A true wolf story. (One that has been told you, if you have none of your own to tell.)
7. Heroes who fight fires.
8. How to put the shot.
9. How to take care of house plants.
10. The butterfly's ball. (An imaginative story; tell about the guests, who they were, how they danced, what they had to eat, how they were dressed, etc.)
11. The fairies' masquerade. (Read Hawthorne's *Howe's Masquerade*, and write a story in which the most common fairies appear in some such way as the ancient worthies appear in Hawthorne's story.)
12. Birds as symbols. (The owl, the eagle, the raven, the dove, the peacock, the kingfisher, etc.)
13. Animals as symbols. (The hog, the ox, the dog, the horse, the fox, the bear, etc.)
14. Trees as symbols. (The palm, the laurel, the oak, the cypress, the olive, the willow, etc.)
15. One of the national flowers. (The rose, England; the thistle, Scotland; the shamrock, Ireland; the lily, France; the marguerite, Italy; the stephanotis, Austria; the chrysanthemum, Japan; the cactus, Mexico; etc.)
16. How to make cider.
17. Which of the Chinese virtues has been of greatest value to the human race? (The Chinese virtues are sympathy, justice, politeness, knowledge, and uprightness.)
18. Breaking out roads in winter.
19. Why a gardener dislikes dogs and cats.
20. What makes a good letter. (The sort of letter you like to receive.)
21. A rabbit trap I once made.
22. "Spreads."
23. How to tell one of the wild flowers. (So that one who has never seen it can recognize it.)
24. What had a boy best do to make a living?
25. What had a girl best do to make a living?

SECTION 39

Variety in Sentences

The best writers vary their sentence structure. There is a twofold reason for this. A paragraph or so of any one kind of sentences, unvaried in length and in structure, is likely to be monotonous, and monotony kills interest. Then, too, thought is infinitely varied, and sentences, if they are fitly to express the thought that is put into them, must follow the various turnings and windings of a writer's thought. The best sentence is the sentence that most closely fits the thought it expresses. You practise making now periodic sentences, and now complex sentences, not because you are to write whole paragraphs of periodic sentences, or whole paragraphs of complex sentences, but because in this way you are to learn to write periodic sentences and complex sentences with some degree of facility. Having learned to do this, you will, when your thought demands expression in a periodic or in a complex sentence, almost spontaneously set down the proper form. And so it is with the other types of sentence structure. No one type of structure is always to be preferred to another. One type of structure has one value, and another type has another value. To fit these types of structure to your thought, is the end and aim of sentence building.

CHAPTER IV

WORDS

SECTION 40

Good Usage

IN your choice of words¹ you are governed by good usage. Good usage, as the term is here employed, is nothing more or less than the general agreement among the best writers and speakers of a language as to the meaning and the standing of words in that language. All words are arbitrary symbols. In the nature of things, there is really no reason why the word "eye" should mean to us what it does. The word, as it appears on this page, is nothing more than a conventional group of peculiarly shaped black marks. As far as these peculiarly shaped black marks are in themselves concerned, they might just as well have another sound and another meaning. The only reason the word "eye" means to us what it does is that the people who use the English language agree in the meaning they assign to it. The people who use the French language have a quite different word for the same object. The people who use the German language have still another word for it. Other peoples have still other different words for it. To speak and

¹ In your grammar, also, you are governed by good usage, but that matter cannot be treated here.

to write intelligibly, therefore, you must know what is good usage in the language you use. You must know, that is, what meaning the best writers and speakers by general agreement assign to the words in good standing in the English language. What the meaning of a word is, what the standing of a word is, cannot always be told with ease and precision. Dictionaries, grammars, rhetorics,¹ the best literature, as well as good sense and good taste, have all to be consulted in determining matters of good usage.

Usage, to be good, must be present, national, and reputable, — a matter that will be made clear in the next three sections, which treat of

1. Present Usage,
2. National Usage, and
3. Reputable Usage.

SECTION 41

Good Usage

1. PRESENT USAGE

Good usage is present usage. In a living language such as ours, changes, more or less gradual, are constantly taking place. On the passing of old things, the names of those things go with them, or stay to take other meanings; on the discovery or invention of new things, new names are formed for them, or old names are revived with a change of meanings. Thus words put on new meanings, when old ones are worn out, as men put on

¹ Dictionaries, grammars, and rhetorics are merely so many attempts at recording the particulars of good usage; the best literature of a language is always the court of last resort for deciding questions of usage.

new coats. Like men, too, words are born, live, and die. But in this birth and death of words and of the meanings of words, it is always the present word and the present meaning that you must use if you are to write intelligibly to those now living.

In this matter of present usage, however, you are not likely to go far astray. Words that are quite obsolete, you will hardly be tempted to use. But you may be tempted to use obsolete meanings of words that are now used only in modern senses. This temptation will be all the greater if you are fresh from the study of Chaucer's poems or Shakspeare's plays. Chaucer and Shakspeare, remember, used only such words as were in present use when they wrote. You may be tempted also to take over into your prose certain words that are dead to our present prose, but living in our present poetry, — such as "in sooth" for "in truth," "'tis" for "it is," "quoth" for "says," "ere" for "before," "perchance" for "perhaps," and the like. It is a good working rule, therefore, to avoid words which do not appear in the prose of the last fifty years or so, and to use words that do appear in the prose of the last fifty years or so only in the senses in which they are used to-day. It is in these two respects that you will be most helped by the knowledge that good usage is present usage.

Exercise 50

1. Make a list of the words in the following stanzas that are not in present use. Make another list of the words now used in different spelling. The stanzas are taken from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, book i, canto i: —

THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE

A gentle Knight was pricking¹ on the plaine,
 Ycladd² in mightie armes and silver shielde,
 Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
 The cruel markes of many a bloody felde;
 Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
 His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
 As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
 Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
 As one for knightly giusts³ and fierce encounters fitt.

And on his brest a bloudie crosse he bore,
 The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
 For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
 And dead as living ever him ador'd:
 Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
 For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:
 Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
 But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.⁴

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
 That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
 That greatest glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
 To winne him worship, and her grace to have,
 Which of all earthly things he most did crave;
 And ever as he rode, his hart did earne⁵
 To prove his puissance in battell brave
 Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
 Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne.

2. Examine other poetical selections in this book, and make a list of the words not found in ordinary prose.

3. Examine a page or two of one of Shakspeare's plays, and make a list of the words not in present use. Examine

¹ *Pricking*, spurring on quickly. ² *Ycladd*, clad. ³ *Giusts*, tilts, justs.

⁴ *Ydrad*, dreaded.

⁵ *Earne*, yearn.

the first eighteen lines of Chaucer's *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, and make a list of the words you do not understand.

SECTION 42

Good Usage

2. NATIONAL USAGE

Good usage is also national usage. National usage requires that you use only English words, and that you use only such English words as are used in America, — not in any one section of the country, nor by any one class of people, but by the best writers and speakers throughout the whole country.

To use words that are not English words shows snobishness and a want of good sense. By English words is not meant merely such words as are natives of English soil. The English language has borrowed from foreign languages, often with no change of form, thousands of words that are now good English words. Such, for example, are "circus," from the Latin; "atlas," from the Greek; "figure," from the French; "schooner," from the Dutch; "piano," from the Italian; "mosquito," from the Spanish; "zinc," from the German; "algebra," from the Arabic; "tobacco," from the North American Indian. "Aid," "air," "branch," "chair," "chief," "cherry," "fade," "fail," "lamp," "obey," "price," and "trunk" were taken from the French. Such words as these are every bit as good as the words "man," "mouse," "winter," "light," and so on, words spoken by the good king Alfred. Such words are now a part of the mother tongue. Words that are not English words are *née* for "born," *mal de mer* for "seasickness," *morceau* for "piece," *fracas* for

"brawl," *ad libitum* for "at pleasure," *ad infinitum* for "indefinitely," and so forth. To insert in your English writing such words as these last, words that are still felt to be foreign, shows snobbishness, if, by using such words, you think to be looked upon as superior to those who use none but good English words, and a want of good sense, if, by using foreign words, you think to be understood as readily as if you were to use their English equivalents.¹

Along with foreign words should go English words used in Great Britain but not used in America. In the vast majority of cases, good usage in Great Britain is good usage in America, but there are a few exceptions. Here are some of the exceptions: —

AMERICAN	BRITISH
men's furnisher	haberdasher
druggist	chemist
corn	maize
grain (wheat, oats, etc.)	corn
lemonade	lemon-squash
pie	tart
engineer	engine-driver
fireman	stoker
conductor	guard
ticket agent	booking-clerk
baggage car	luggage-van
railroad	railway
freight-train	goods-train

¹ It is safe to say that you will almost never have occasion, in the writing of school themes, to use a foreign expression. Experienced writers sometimes employ a foreign expression, owing to the lack of an English equivalent, to communicate with precision some nice distinction in ideas. This is seldom, however. "We shall have no disputes about diction," wrote Macaulay to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*; "the English language is not so poor but that I may very well find in it the means of contenting both you and myself."

AMERICAN	BRITISH
car (railroad)	carriage
street-car	tram
elevator	lift
pitcher	jug
spool	reel or bobbin
dry goods store	draper's shop
blacksmith	farrier
faucet	tap
bench	form

At one time Great Britain rightly set the standard of usage for English speaking people the world over, but now that most of the English speaking people live in the United States, and now that the literature which is being written in the United States is in no wise inferior to the literature being written in Great Britain and in her English speaking colonies, it seems likely that hereafter American, rather than British, usage will be recognized as national usage. At any rate, Americans should use only such English words as are in good standing in America.

The words that are in good standing in America, as was suggested at the beginning of this section, are the words used by the best writers and speakers throughout the whole country, and not the words used only in some one section of the country or by some one class of people. Thus, words used only in Maine, or only in Mississippi, or only in the West, or only in the South, are mere localisms. Such words are without national standing, and are not universally intelligible. Though travel all the while lessens the number of these localisms, there are still many differences in speech between the different parts of the country. In some parts of the country, for example,

"gums" is used for "india-rubber overshoes," "tote" and "pack" for "carry," "quite some" and "a sight" for "a good deal," "right smart" for "very," "kind of" for "rather," "disremember" for "do not remember," "unbeknown to" for "unknown to," "I want in" for "I want to come in," etc., etc.¹ Technical words, which are words used almost exclusively by some one class of people, — by lawyers, or by chemists, or by milliners, or by football enthusiasts, — are, with some exceptions,² quite as unintelligible to the general public as are localisms, and are therefore either to be carefully defined or to be avoided outright. If a lawyer is addressing a judge or an audience of lawyers, he may speak of "adverse possession," "easements," "the law of estoppel," "torts," and the like, but if he is addressing an audience not likely to be familiar with the technical language of his profession, he uses such language under pain of not being understood. Huxley, who spoke and wrote on the most abstruse scientific subjects, was at great pains, when addressing a popular audience, to translate such scientific terms as he found it necessary to employ, and thus to make his language

¹ Anything like a complete list of localisms is out of the question here. You will find it a profitable exercise, however, to make a list of your own localisms, and to avoid their use in your future speech and writing.

² The exceptions are such words as have been so constantly before the general public as now to be in some sense familiar to all Americans. Such words are, to illustrate from the language of law, "arrest," "attorney," "bail," "bankrupt," "capital punishment," "client," "contract," "damages," "deed," "divorce," "evidence," "fee," "fine," "foreclosure," "injunction," "jury," "lease," "mortgage," etc. Though such words as these mean to most outsiders nothing like what they mean to those who use them in their rigidly technical senses, they still convey fairly precise ideas, and may therefore be used with freedom and without definition.

intelligible to people of very ordinary powers of understanding.

Exercise 51

1. Point out the words in the following passages which violate national usage : —

The kettle was on the fire, tea-things set, everything prepared for her guest by the hospitable hostess, who, thinking the gentleman would take tea to his breakfast, had sent off a gossoon by the first light to Clonbrony, for an ounce of tea, a quarter of sugar, and a loaf of white bread; and there was on the little table good cream, milk, butter, eggs—all the promise of an excellent breakfast. It was a fresh morning, and there was a pleasant fire on the hearth, neatly swept up.—MARIA EDGEWORTH, *The Absentee*, chap. xi.

Although opening higher on foreign buying, wheat developed subsequent weakness on reports that a leading Chicago bull house had unloaded \$4,000,000 of May wheat.

The limited offerings of desirable quality wool find a quick sale at sustained prices, but ordinary clips move slowly at easy rates. Hides show no quotable change, sound dried stock selling well at full figures, while wet-salted offerings are neglected.

Modish jackets are characterized by the slot-seam effect, and one of the newest designs may be developed in cloth, velvet, corduroy, or any of the heavy, rough goods, and is in blouse Eton style, with bishop or coat sleeves and with or without the peplum.

A great majority of the spectators were of the impression that Legal Maxim was the winner of the second race, and there was a big outcry when Lucien Appleby's number went up. To the people in the saddling paddock and that part of the grand stand commanding the best view of the wire, Legal Maxim certainly looked like the winner, but there is every reason to believe that Lucien Appleby did really nose out Legal Maxim.

2. Point out the localisms in the following sentences. Rewrite the sentences, substituting for the localisms the words you think should have been used : —

1. It is right smart cold this morning !
 2. He allowed he would go to town to-morrow.
-

3. The soil over there is poor, I calculate.
4. He keeps a truck-patch over in Smith's medder.
5. I expect it was Harry himself.
6. He hails from Arkansas.

3. Bring to the class a newspaper report of a football match. Point out the technical terms, and rewrite the report, defining such terms as you think are unintelligible to persons not intimately acquainted with the language of football.

4. Examine the article entitled "Fashions of To-day," in the last number of *The Delineator*, and make a list of the technical terms in the first column.

5. Witness a baseball game, and report it in newspaper style. Rewrite your report, omitting or defining the terms likely to be unintelligible to persons knowing little about the game.

6. Under the twelve heads below, in the *Standard Dictionary*, you will find lists of technical words. Select the list you know most about, and briefly define ten or more of the words in it. Select one of the more important words in your list, and with the help of a drawing, if necessary, describe it so fully and clearly that a person not acquainted with the word will understand it thoroughly:—

agriculture
architecture
baseball
blacksmith

brickmaking
carpentry
football
foundry

golf
mining
plumbing
printing

SECTION 43

Good Usage

3. REPUTABLE USAGE

It is not enough that words be merely in present and in national use; they must be in reputable use as well. Words cannot be made reputable by a host of newspaper reporters or by one or two or three even good writers and speakers; they must be used by so many writers and speakers of good repute that their standing is above criticism. Words must be used by the body of the best writers and speakers of our language before they may be said to be in reputable use.

Slang, for example, is not reputable, because it is not countenanced by the body of the best writers and speakers of our language. Slang is disreputable. Originally the secret jargon of tramps, of vagabonds, and of thieves,¹ slang is now the unmistakable sign of low breeding, of vulgarity, and of intellectual poverty. "I have known several very genteel idiots," writes Holmes,² "whose whole vocabulary had deliquesced into some half-dozen expres-

¹ "Much of the older slang was largely due to the need felt by thieves, tramps, and vagabonds for a secret language; to them it was obviously a practical need. The slang of the costermongers of London is a case in point. These tradesmen have had for many years a secret and extensive vocabulary of words pronounced backwards, as 'yannep,' for penny; 'edgabac,' for cabbage. The rhyming slang of London vagabonds is another illustration; in this, 'Abraham's willing' means shilling, and 'Isle of France,' dance. Also the centre slang of London thieves, as, 'itchper,' for pitch." — W. C. GORE, *Student Slang*, in *Contributions to Rhetorical Theory* (University of Michigan). See also G. W. Matsell, *Vocabulum*; or, *the Rogue's Lexicon*; J. Flynt, *Tramping with Tramps*, 381-398.

² *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, 256.

sions. All things fell into one of two great categories, — *fast* or *slow*. Man's chief end was to be a *brick*. When the great calamities of life overtook their friends, these last were spoken of as being *a good deal cut up*. Nine-tenths of human existence were summed up in the single word, *bore*. These expressions come to be the algebraic symbols of minds which have grown too weak or indolent to discriminate. They are the blank checks of intellectual bankruptcy ; — you may fill them up with what idea you like ; it makes no difference, for there are no funds in the treasury upon which they are drawn."

The use of slang, as Holmes suggests in the sentence next to the last, shows a want of discrimination. Now discrimination is nothing more or less than the noting of differences between the things you see. To describe these differences in appropriate language helps you to note them. But all this requires mental exertion, more mental exertion than people with weak and lazy minds are either capable of putting forth, or willing to put forth. Such persons therefore resort to slang to save themselves the trouble of seeing and of thinking. To them a charming young girl is "swell" or "out of sight" ; so is a difficult play in football, a good dinner, a red and green necktie, a fashionable gown, a thrilling story, a speaking picture, a gorgeous sunset in a California sky, and the dull muffled thunder of awful Niagara. The habitual use of slang produces mental atrophy.

An occasional slang expression, it cannot be denied, works its way, through colloquial language, into reputable use. Some of our most vigorous idioms, it is true, were once slang expressions. Undoubtedly, too, some of the words and phrases which to-day are characterized as slang,

will sooner or later be elevated to the dignity of idiomatic usage. But it is not the business of boys and girls in or out of school, or of young men and young women in or out of college, to make slang reputable. This business may safely be left to the nicer understanding of the writers and speakers who set the standard of good usage. Pope's rule, though hackneyed, is still the best:—

“In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old;
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.”¹

Exercise 52

1. Make an alphabetic list of the slang expressions you have heard about school recently. Indicate precisely how each expression was used. Thus:—

biff, *n.* A blow. “I gave him a biff in the eye.”

biff, *v.* To refuse; to repulse; to slight.

crackerjack, *n.* 1. A select thing; something almost perfect. “He got a crackerjack when he bought that horse.”

2. A person having unusual ability or sharpness at any particular thing. “As a pitcher he's a crackerjack.”

crush, *v.* To astonish. “Crush him by a perfect recitation.”

Are any words in your list abbreviations of words in good use? Example: “exam” for “examination.” Do any of the words show a change in pronunciation? Example: “varsity” for “university.” Do you find any figurative expressions? Example: “That's a bird of a suit you have on.” Account for the origin of as many of the expressions as you can. Finally, express in appropriate language the thought each slang word or phrase seems to suggest.

¹ *Essay on Criticism*, part ii.

2. Make a list of the expressions you have used in conversation recently that are not sanctioned by good usage.

3. Make a list of not more than twenty expressions taken from your written work that violate good usage.

4. Look up two or three of the following references, and then tell how words not in good use may be used effectively in stories and poems:—

George Eliot, *Silas Marner*, chaps. vi-vii; Irving Bacheller, *Eben Holden*, chaps. i-v; S. R. Crockett, *The Stickit Minister or The Raiders*; Booth Tarkington, *The Gentleman from Indiana*, chap. x (last part); E. N. Westcott, *David Harum*, chaps. i-ii; F. H. Burnett, *In Connection with the De Willoughby Claim*, chap. i; Burns, *For A' That An' A' That*; Lowell, *The Courtin'*; J. W. Riley, *The Old Swimmin' Hole*.

5. Write a paragraph on a subject of your own choosing; revise the paragraph with a view to good usage.

SECTION 44

Precision in the Use of Words

Good usage determines not only what words are in good use, but also in what senses the words in good use shall be employed. Though many words shade into others almost imperceptibly, and though dictionaries confuse by giving to some words several apparently distinct meanings, good usage assigns to every word in the language some one meaning, or some one shade of meaning, which distinguishes that word from every other word in the language. That is, each word in the language says or implies something which no other word in the language can say or imply. Precision in the use of words requires you to use a word in the sense which good usage assigns

to it, and to fit words with the utmost exactness to the thoughts you wish to express.

To be precise in your use of words, you must first think with precision, and then find the one word or the one group of words which precisely expresses your thought. It is said of Flaubert that he was possessed with "an absolute belief that there exists but one way of expressing one thing, one word to call it by, one adjective to qualify, one verb to animate it," and that "he gave himself to superhuman labor for the discovery, in every phrase, of that word, that verb, that epithet. In this way, he believed in some mysterious harmony of expression, and when a true word seemed to him to lack euphony, still went on seeking another, with invincible patience, certain that he had not yet got hold of the unique word. . . . A thousand preoccupations would beset him at the same moment, always with this desperate certitude fixed in his spirit: Among all the expressions in the world, all forms and turns of expression, there is but *one* — one form, one mode — to express what I want to say."¹

Exercise 53

1. The following words are frequently misused. Distinguish between enough of them to form the habit of never using a word whose meaning you do not know: —

Nouns: (1) ability, capacity; (2) acceptance, acceptation; (3) access, accession; (4) act, action; (5) advance, advancement; (6) alternative, choice; (7) avocation, vocation; (8) balance, remainder; (9) character, reputation; (10) college, university; (11) congressman, representative; (12) council, counsel; (13) couple, pair; (14) depot, railroad station; (15) discovery, invention; (16) duty, right; (17) emigration, immigration; (18) falseness, falsity; (19) home,

¹ Quoted by Walter Pater in his *Essay on Style*. See Section 5, note.

house, residence; (20) limit, limitation; (21) majority, plurality; (22) necessities, necessities; (23) observance, observation; (24) part, portion; (25) party, person; (26) pupil, student, scholar; (27) receipt, recipe; (28) relation, relative; (29) significance, signification; (30) site, situation; (31) statue, statute.

Verbs: (32) accept, except; (33) admire, like, love; (34) affect, effect; (35) aggravate, provoke; (36) allude, elude, mention; (37) approve, indorse, second; (38) assert, claim, maintain, state; (39) begin, commence; (40) bring, fetch; (41) calculate, intend; (42) counsel, recommend; (43) debase, demean, degrade; (44) desire, want, wish; (45) drive, ride; (46) excuse, pardon; (47) fix, mend, repair; (48) get, have; (49) guess, reckon, think; (50) happen, transpire; (51) lay, lie; (52) learn, teach; (53) leave, let; (54) lend, loan; (55) locate, settle; (56) persecute, prosecute; (57) prescribe, proscribe; (58) propose, purpose; (59) proved, proven; (60) raise, rear; (61) recollect, remember; (62) set, sit; (63) stay, stop.

Adjectives and adverbs: (64) almost, most; (65) angry, mad; (66) apt, liable, likely; (67) awfully, very; (68) bound, determined; (69) capacious, large; (70) common, mutual; (71) continual, continuous; (72) credible, credulous; (73) constantly, often; (74) contemptible, contemptuous; (75) elegant, excellent, pleasing; (76) eminent, prominent; (77) exceptional, exceptionable; (78) extremely, real, really; (79) famous, noted, notorious; (80) funny, odd; (81) healthy, healthful, wholesome; (82) informed, posted; (83) last, latest; (84) last, preceding; (85) oral, verbal; (86) partially, partly; (87) practicable, practical; (88) some, somewhat; (89) rather, quite; (90) when, while.

Prepositions and conjunctions: (91) among, between; (92) above, beyond; (93) after, afterward; (94) as, that; (95) as, like; (96) except, unless; (97) if, but, that; (98) unless, without.

You may distinguish between the above words in some-thing like this fashion: —

Ability is power to plan, direct, give, or do. Capacity is power to receive or contain. Ability is an active power; capacity is a passive power.

Lincoln had the ability to put noble thoughts into homely words.

Franklin had a vast capacity for practical knowledge.

2. Illustrate by original sentences the correct use of ten of these words : —

Casualty, definite, definitive, dock, wharf, jewellery, jewels, venal, venial, pell-mell, quantity, number, unique, specialty, series, succession, solicitude, solicitation, adherence, adhesion, complement, compliment, habit, deceit, egotism, enormity, esteem, lot, identity, novice, organism, plenty, recourse, resource.

3. Explain the correct uses of the following words, and use them correctly in sentences of your own : —

lovely	elegant	nice
horrid	exciting	jolly
fine	fascinating	bully
awfully	gorgeous	ghastly
swell	beastly	splendid
such	stunning	clever
mad	vastly	funny
beautiful	grand	ugly
sweet	nasty	deadly

4. What does the dictionary tell you about the origin of the following words? What about their development in the language? Does this knowledge help you to use any of the words with greater precision?

(1) Gotham (as humorously applied to New York), meander, naughty, gas, buff, gingham, dandelion, date; (2) civil, dunce, idiot, pagan, villain, volume; (3) Carolina, Delaware, New York; (4) arm, eye, foot, hand, head; (5) awful, fearful, dreadful, terrible, horrible; (6) jet (of water), jet (an ornament); (7) telegraph, telephone, telescope; (8) timely, chronic, temporary, temporal.

5. Make a list of words taken from your past written work which were not precisely used. Rewrite ten of the sentences in which the words originally stood, using all words correctly and fitting them precisely to your thought.

6. Write a paragraph on a subject of your own choosing; revise it with a view to precision in the use of words.

SECTION 45

Vigor in the Use of Words

If you are content merely to be understood, precision, if combined with clearness, is all that is needed to make your writing intelligible. But if you wish to hold the interest of your readers, or if you wish to do even more, to arouse that interest, to convince your readers, and perhaps even to move them to action, you must write with more than mere clearness and precision. You must write with vigor. Putting vigor into words, like a good many other processes of composition, is preëminently a matter of character. No amount of juggling with words, if you are not sincere in your thought, if you are not in earnest as to what you say, if you are not in close sympathy with those you address, if you have not the vigor of thought that comes from vigor of character, and from vigor of character only, will produce effectiveness in writing or give vigor to style.

Aside from this essential matter of character, vigor in the use of words can be traced directly to brevity in the use of words. The problem of brevity is this: How can the most thought be conveyed with the least amount of expression? And the solution of the problem, aside from the matter of character again, is this: Use the smallest possible number of words to express a thought, and do this by choosing only such words as imply the greatest amount of thought. Putting the matter in another light, the problem of vigor has to do both with what words express and with what words imply.¹

To use no more words than are needed to express a

¹ See Section 31.

thought is to avoid what the books call redundancy. Such expressions as "gaining the universal love and esteem of all men," "We should use a purer diction of speech," "We tried a number of experiments," "his own autobiography," and other more or less glaring violations of the rule, are not vigorous, and therefore not effective, because they can be put more pointedly.

To choose words that imply the greatest amount of thought is a more difficult matter than to use no more words than are needed to express a thought. In this connection it is worth while to quote what Mr. Wendell says : ¹ —

In the midst of the American Revolution an event occurred familiar to you all. General Arnold betrayed the American cause. A British officer, travelling in disguise with messages of this treason, was arrested by some local patriots, and fell into the hands of Washington. This unhappy officer, Major André, was tried by court-martial and met a tragic fate. Now, how, in a single sentence, should you describe what happened to him? We all know what it was. But here are four separate phrases, each of which accurately tells what happened, yet each of which tells it in a distinctly different way: "Major André died": that is perfectly true; and if we were breaking such news to a relative, that would probably be the wisest form to begin with. "Major André was killed": that is equally true; so are "Major André was executed," and "Major André was hanged." Now, there is little doubt, I think, that each of these phrases would be more apt to hold attention than the preceding. "He was killed" is a more forcible assertion than "he died"; "he was executed," than he was killed"; and most forcible of all is, "he was hanged." If we now consider these four phrases together, we shall find that each includes the last. Whoever is killed must die; whoever is executed by any means must be killed; whoever is hanged must probably be executed. In other words, each term, more definite than the last,

¹ *English Composition*, 240-242. Printed by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

suggested or connoted all the preceding ones. Again, to take not single words or phrases, but words in composition, compare these three simple statements: "I found him very agreeable one afternoon;" "I found him very agreeable one wet afternoon;" "I found him very agreeable one wet afternoon in a country house." Now, all that the word *wet* says is that the afternoon was watery; but it clearly implies that it was an afternoon when you would not care to be out of doors. All that the words *in a country house* state is the simple fact of locality; but they imply that you were in a place where not to be out of doors was probably a serious trial to the temper. So the last statement as a whole, "I found him very agreeable one wet afternoon in a country house," suggests, though it does not state, that the person spoken of was one whose charms could overcome a pretty bad temper. At the same time, it is a phrase which I fancy anybody would admit to hold the attention more strongly than either of its predecessors; and its superiority in force lies not so much in the bare facts which it adds to the first statement as in the thoughts and emotions it suggests. Still again, take this sentence from one of M. de Maupassant's stories: "It was the 15th of August, — the feast of the Holy Virgin, and of the Emperor Napoleon." He states only two facts about the 15th of August, and these in the simplest of words. Neither by itself would hold one's attention enough to remain long in memory. But put them together; think what the Holy Virgin means to Catholic Europe, and what the Emperor Napoleon means to those who are not subdued by the magic genius of Bonaparte, — and you have a sentence that when mid-August comes about will hover in your head. Yet the force of this — so greatly superior to the force of either statement by itself — lies not in what is actually said, but wholly in what is implied, suggested, connoted, in this sudden, unexpected antithesis.

All this means, to use Mr. Wendell's words again, that "a forcible writer knows not only what he wishes to say, but also what he wishes to imply; he understands, it is to be hoped, what he wishes a reader to know, but he understands more profoundly still, and indeed, for his immediate purpose of force he should understand chiefly, into what mood he wishes the reader to be thrown."

SECTION 46

Vigor in the Use of Words

1. BIG WORDS AND LITTLE WORDS

Learn the following paragraph by heart:—

LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS¹

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion,—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain,—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom,—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Now read Lincoln's speech aloud, and follow it with this extract from Webster's *The Bunker Hill Monument*:²—

¹ At the dedication of the National Cemetery, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863.

² An address delivered at the laying of the corner-stone of the Bunker Hill Monument at Charlestown, Massachusetts, June 17, 1825.

Venerable Men! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else how changed! You hear now no roar of hostile cannon, you see no mixed volumes of smoke and flame rising from burning Charlestown. The ground strewn with the dead and the dying; the impetuous charge; the steady and successful repulse; the loud call to repeated assault; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated resistance; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death; — all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more. All is peace. The heights of yonder metropolis, its towers and roofs, which you then saw filled with wives and children and countrymen in distress and terror, and looking with unutterable emotions for the issue of the combat, have presented you to-day with the sight of its whole happy population, come out to welcome and greet you with a universal jubilee. Yonder proud ships, by a felicity of position appropriately lying at the foot of this mount, and seeming fondly to cling around it, are not means of annoyance to you, but your country's own means of distinction and defence.¹ All is peace; and God has granted you this sight of your country's happiness, ere you slumber in the grave. He has allowed you to behold and to partake the reward of your patriotic toils; and he has allowed us, your sons and countrymen, to meet you here, and in the name of the present generation, in the name of your country, in the name of liberty, to thank you!

Between the simple speech of Lincoln and the ponderous oratory of Webster there is a marked difference in effect. This difference in effect appears in the two paragraphs just quoted, although the first paragraph is a complete speech and the second a mere extract. Lincoln's

¹ The United States Navy Yard at Charlestown is situated at the base of Bunker Hill.

words carry to a more exalted height of thought and emotion, and descend to a lower level of language, than Webster's words do. The big words in both paragraphs show that neither Lincoln nor Webster stopped at using a big word when the thought demanded a big word. Though in each paragraph there are many more little words than big words, there are decidedly more big words in Webster's paragraph than in Lincoln's. This last fact, I take it, accounts almost wholly for the difference in effect between the two paragraphs, which difference, at last resort, resolves itself into a difference in character between Webster and Lincoln.

It is evident, then, that the difference between big words and little words is not a difference between good and bad, but simply and solely a difference in effect. Big or little, the words in the two paragraphs quoted are there because they were needed to express the thought of the speakers. As always in the best prose or poetry, not a word in either paragraph can be changed without loss. Big words will not do the work of little words, any more than little words can be made to do the work of big words. Knowing the effect you wish to produce, and the kind of words best adapted to produce that effect, you choose your words accordingly.

Little words, with an occasional exception, are more vigorous than big words. This is because they imply more than big words ever can imply. The reason for this is that we as children knew little words first. It was through them that we came into our knowledge of language. A child, writes Mr. Spencer,¹ says "*I have*, not *I possess* — *I wish*, not *I desire* ; he does not *reflect*, he *thinks* ; he does

¹ *The Philosophy of Style.*

not beg for *amusement*, but for *play*; he calls things *nice* or *nasty*, not *pleasant* or *disagreeable*. The synonyms which he learns in after years never become so closely, so organically, connected with the ideas signified, as do these original words used in childhood; and hence the association remains less strong. But in what does a strong association between a word and an idea differ from a weak one? Simply in the greater ease and rapidity of the suggestive action. It can be in nothing else. Both of two words, if they be strictly synonymous,¹ eventually call up the same image. The expression — It is *acid*, must in the end give rise to the same thought as It is *sour*; but because the term *acid* was learnt later in life, and has not been so often followed by the thought symbolized, it does not so readily arouse that thought as the term *sour*. If we remember how slowly and with what labor the appropriate ideas follow unfamiliar words in another language, and how increasing familiarity with such words brings greater rapidity and ease of comprehension; and if we consider that the same process must have gone on with the words of our mother tongue from childhood upwards, we shall clearly see that the earliest learnt and oftenest used words will, other things equal, call up images with less loss of time and energy than their later learnt synonyms.”² These earliest learnt and oftenest used words will, other

¹ But words are never strictly synonymous; if words happen to have the same meaning, they differ more or less in suggestion and application. The latter is true of “sour” and “acid.”

² Mr. Spencer applies these remarks to non-Latin English, but it seems more accurate to apply them to little words. With a few exceptions, it is the little words which we know best, and which therefore imply most. That is, it is always a question of familiarity, and never a question of origin. See Section 42.

things equal, imply more, and therefore be more vigorous, than the big words with which we are not so familiar.

Exercise 54

1. Though you should never hesitate to use a big word if the thought demands a big word, you should not deliberately go out of your way to find a big word. In particular, avoid newspaper English, which is notorious for its studied want of simplicity. Study the following list, taken from the introduction to the second series of Lowell's *Biglow Papers*, and add to it such similar expressions as you find in your daily paper: —

"A dozen years ago I began a list," writes Lowell, "which I have added to from time to time, of some of the charges which may be fairly laid at his [the newspaper reporter's] door. I give a few of them as showing their tendency, all the more dangerous that their effect, like that of some poisons, is insensibly cumulative, and that they are sure at last of effect among a people whose chief reading is the daily paper. I give in two columns the old style and its modern equivalent.

OLD STYLE

Was hanged.
When the halter was put round
his neck.

A great crowd came to see.

Great fire.
The fire spread.

House burned.
The fire was got under.

Man fell.

NEW STYLE

Was launched into eternity.
When the fatal noose was adjusted about the neck of the unfortunate victim of his own unbridled passions.
A vast concourse was assembled to witness.
Disastrous conflagration.
The conflagration extended its devastating career.
Edifice consumed.
The progress of the devouring element was arrested.
Individual was precipitated.

A horse and wagon ran against.	A valuable horse attached to a vehicle driven by J. S., in the employment of J. B., collided with.
The frightened horse.	The infuriated animal.
Sent for the doctor.	Called into requisition the services of the family physician.
The mayor of the city, in a short speech, welcomed.	The chief magistrate of the metropolis, in well-chosen and eloquent language, frequently interrupted by the plaudits of the surging multitude, officially tendered the hospitalities.
I shall say a few words.	I shall, with your permission, beg leave to offer some brief observations.
Began his answer.	Commenced his rejoinder.
Asked him to dine.	Tendered him a banquet.
A bystander advised.	One of those omnipresent characters who, as if in pursuance of some previous arrangement, are certain to be encountered in the vicinity when an accident occurs, ventured the suggestion.
He died.	He deceased, he passed out of existence, his spirit quitted its earthly habitation, winged its way to eternity, shook off its burden, etc."

2. Find a newspaper paragraph in the "new style," and turn it into plain English.

3. Make a list of the words in *Liberty and Obedience* (Exercise 32) which imply most to you. Are they big words or little words? Make the same experiment with some other selection in this book.

4. What fifteen words in Exercise 53 imply most to you? What five words imply least to you?

SECTION 47

Vigor in the Use of Words

2. GENERAL WORDS AND SPECIFIC WORDS

Precision requires the use of a general word for a general idea, and of a specific word for a specific idea. That is, if you think "animal," you are to say "animal," and not "cat" or "dog" or "sheep"; and if you think "cat," "dog," or "sheep," you are to say "cat," "dog," or "sheep," and not "animal." But vigor requires something more than this. Vigor requires not only the fitting of general words to general ideas, and of specific words to specific ideas, but also the thinking of many specific ideas. Now, the thinking of specific ideas is the hardest kind of work for the lazy mind. The reason is this: Most general ideas include several, often very many, specific ideas, and it is commonly easier to let a general idea stay general,—and to most people a general idea is a vague idea,—than it is to draw out from that general idea the one needed specific idea. Thus, if we see a thing move,—let it be a baby, a man, a bird, or a fish,—it takes less mental energy to put down the general word "move" than it takes to think out the specific motion, and then to describe that specific motion by the specific word that precisely expresses the idea,—as "creep," "walk," "fly," or "swim." And yet it is almost always worth while to put forth the mental energy needed to get the specific idea, for it is the

specific word, with the specific idea back of it, that starts the most vivid image in the mind of the reader.

To illustrate : —

GENERAL

[Incident in the story of the sleeping beauty.] And now that the enchantment was at an end, everything and everybody in and about the palace awoke and went about his peculiar business.

SPECIFIC

A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt.

There rose a noise of striking clocks,

And feet that ran, and doors that clapt.

And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;

A fuller light illumined all,

A breeze thro' all the garden swept,

A sudden hubbub shook the hall,

And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,

The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,

The fire shot up, the martin flew,

The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,

The maid and page renew'd their strife,

The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,

And all the long-pent stream of life

Dash'd downward in a cataract.¹

¹ Tennyson, *The Day-Dream*.

Consider the flowers, how they gradually increase in their size; they do no manner of work, and yet I declare to you that no king whatever, in his most splendid habit, is dressed up like them. If, then, God in his providence doth so adorn the vegetable productions, which continue but a little time on the land, and are afterwards put into the fire, how much more will he provide clothing for you?¹

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If, then, God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?²

Though specific words give vigor to writing, and thus deliver it from dulness, they are not therefore always to be preferred to general words. There is a real work for general words to do, and specific words can no more do this work than general words can do the work of specific words. For instance, general words are quite indispensable for the making of precise distinctions of thought in science and philosophy. General words have also to be used whenever it is necessary to sum up the characteristics of a number of related things, the members of a single class of objects. Certain subtle effects, moreover, which cannot be discussed here, are to be got by the use of general terms,—such effects, for example, as by the very vagueness of the language in which they are clothed stimulate thought. “For old, unhappy, far-off things,” “Enclosed in a tumultuous privacy of storm,” “The sessions of sweet, silent thought,” and the like, are examples of these rare effects.

¹ Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 278–279.

² Luke, xii, 27–28.

Exercise 55

1. Make a list of specific words for each of the following general words : —

Sound, apple, living being, insect,¹ bird, tree, house, planet, force, pleasant, disagreeable, see, work.

2. Use the following general and specific words in original sentences : —

(1) Farm tool, pitchfork ; (2) dog, watch-dog, mastiff ; (3) flower, buttercup ; (4) facial expression, a frank look, a keen look, a crafty look, a wistful look, a stolid look ; (5) move, walk, run, hop, skip, jump, leap, slide, slip, creep, crawl, stroll, saunter, tramp, stalk, dodge, glide, march, trudge, ramble, bowl along, ride, drive, travel, etc., etc.

3. Study Lincoln's use of specific and general words in the *Gettysburg Address* (Section 46).

4. Make lists of the specific words in two or three of the descriptive selections at the beginning of Chapter VII. Substitute general words for the specific words in the first selection, and note the effect.

5. Study the use of general words in the selection quoted in Section 19. Can specific words be substituted for any of the general words ?

SECTION 48**Vigor in the Use of Words****3. FIGURATIVE WORDS AND LITERAL WORDS**

Figurative words, when not used for mere embellishment, and in ordinary theme work they should never be so used, are commonly more vigorous than literal words. This is because figurative words, or, to be more precise,

¹ Note that "insect" is general as compared with "bee," but specific as compared with "living being."

words used figuratively, commonly express or imply more than literal words, or, to be quite precise, words used literally have the power either to express or to imply. They do this by indicating or suggesting relations which mere literal expressions cannot make evident. Although figurative expressions are not always understood instantly, — more often than not, probably, they are, — like stimulants, they excite in the mind of the reader far more than the extra amount of energy required for their interpretation. Figurative words, however, may not be so deliberately sought after as short words or specific words. If they are deliberately sought after, they are quite likely to seem affected. To use figurative words effectively, therefore, you must in some measure think in figures ; that is, you must use figurative expressions so naturally and so aptly that they will attract little or no attention as mere figures of speech. If figures do not come to you thus easily and naturally, you will do well to scan your figures as curiously as you know how. Pause over each figure in your writing, and ask yourself such test questions as these: "Does this figure grow naturally out of my subject?" "Is it likely to give my readers pleasure?" "Is the figure consistent?" "Is the comparison I have made one that I myself have thought out?" "Is the figure in the best possible form?" If a figure will not stand the test of such questions as these, it had better be cut out, and some simple, unstudied literal expression put in its place.

NOTE. — A review of the figures most used may be necessary at this point. Metaphor, simile, personification, apostrophe, and metonymy, at any rate, should be defined and illustrated. The matter is treated in most of the older books in rhetoric ; for a bibliography see Gertrude Buck's *Figures of Rhetoric: A Psychological Study*, in

Contributions to Rhetorical Theory (University of Michigan), or, Gayley and Scott, *An Introduction to the Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism*, 235-238.

Exercise 56

1. Study the following similes. What things are compared? What is the point of each comparison? How is the comparison in each case expressed? Turn three of the similes into metaphors, and observe the effect:—

1. The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. — SHAKSPERE.
2. True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As they move easiest who have learnt to dance. — POPE.
3. It is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed, the deeper they burn. — SOUTHEY.
4. Thou mindest me of gentle folk,
Old gentle folk are they;
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way. — HOLMES.
5. [The brown bear] hugged as many [monkeys] as he could hold,
and then began to hit with a regular *bat-bat-bat*, like the flipping strokes
of a paddle wheel. — KIPLING.
6. And as, in a decaying winter-fire,
A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—
So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in,
Reddening the sea around; and all was dark.
— MATTHEW ARNOLD.
7. For days and nights he wander'd on,
Push'd on by hands behind;
And the days went by like black, black rain,
And the nights like rushing wind. — ROBERT BUCHANAN.
8. A sudden little river cross'd my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes. — BROWNING.

2. The following are metaphors. What things are identified? In what does the resemblance lie? Change three of the metaphors into similes, and note the effect:—

1. Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be, that the great want which mankind labors under, at this present period, is—Sleep! — HAWTHORNE.

2. Paradoxes are the burrs of literature — they stick to the mind.

3. Words are the counters of wise men, and the money of fools.

4. What is hope? — a smiling rainbow children follow through the wet. — CARLYLE.

5. Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. — SHAKSPERE.

6. There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries. — *Ibid.*

7. [Said of man.] Thou pendulum between a smile and tear. — BYRON.

8. A thing of beauty is a joy forever. — KEATS.

3. What words in the following passages are used figuratively? Turn five of the passages into literal language, and observe the difference in effectiveness: —

(1) A sharp tongue. (2) A heavy sorrow. (3) At one stride comes the dark. (4) The streets are dumb with snow. (5) The garden's flowery tribes. (6) The plunging seas. (7) The arrowy Rhone. (8) A stately squadron of snowy geese. (9) I am going to see the great Perhaps (Rabelais's dying words). (10) Deep-rooted prejudice. (11) Scattered wits. (12) The back of a sofa. (13) The ribs of an umbrella. (14) The arm of a chair. (15) The tongue of a buckle. (16) The eye of a needle. (17) The foot of a mountain. (18) Whispering wind. (19) The deep hush of the woods. (20) The kettle is boiling. (21) A copy of Shakspeare. (22) He sets a good table. (23) A nickel. (24) Nodding night. (25) Dizzy precipice. (26) The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove.

4. Point out the figures in the following passages, and explain the effectiveness of each figure: —

1. Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. — SHAKSPERE.
 2. The summer ray russets the plain. — THOMSON.
 3. Glowworms began to trim their starry lamps. — KEATS.
 4. Even to foes who visit us as guests,
Due hospitality should be displayed;
The tree screens with its leaves the man who fells it.
— *Mahabharata*.
 5. All through life there are wayside inns, where man may refresh
his soul with lore. — LONGFELLOW.
 6. Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out; where there is no
talebearer, the strife ceaseth. — *Proverbs*, xxvi, 20.
 7. No mud can soil us but the mud we throw. — LOWELL.
 8. The primrose, ere her time,
Peeps thro' the moss that clothes the hawthorn root.
— COWPER.
 9. The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall
flow with milk. — *Joel*, iii, 18.
 10. Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world. — EMERSON.
 11. Youth is a garland of roses; age is a crown of thorns. — *Talmud*.
 12. The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley. — BURNS.
 13. I'm wearing awa' to the land o' the leal.
5. Show how the following figures are faulty: —
1. [Example of worn-out figure; suggest others.] The pen is
mightier than the sword.
 2. [Example of mixed metaphor.]
I bridle in my struggling muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a bolder strain.
 3. Trefalden cast a hasty glance about the room, as if looking for
some weapon wherewith to slake the hatred that glittered in his eye.
 4. [A far-fetched figure diverts the mind from the main thought.]
The power of directing the local disposition of the army is the royal
prerogative, the master feather in the eagle's wing.
 5. [Said of a stream.] Sparkling through a lovely valley like a
gold chain over an embroidered vest.

6. [Nothing is gained by comparisons that are not easily understood.]

The Wandering Jew has seen
Men come and go as the fixed Pyramids
Have seen even the steadfast polar star
Shift in its place.

7. [A comparison must not be pushed too far. When it has served its purpose, it should be dropped.]

[Old age] should
Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
Of that vast ocean it must sail so soon:
And put good works on board: and wait the wind
That shortly blows us into worlds unknown.

6. Draw figures from the following sources. Thus, —

There are more butterflies than bees in fashionable society.

Butterfly, bat, gold fish in glass jars, ferns, loam, house plants, late flowers, falling leaves, flowing water, rising smoke, vapor, rain, wind, clouds, night.

7. Put the following thoughts figuratively: —

Be honest. Work hard. Save money. Tell the truth.

Exercise 57

1. Revise some two or three of your recently written paragraphs with a view to greater vigor in the use of words.

2. Write a paragraph on a subject of your own choosing; revise it with a view to greater vigor in the use of words.

SECTION 49

Elegance in the Use of Words

Beyond clearness and precision, beyond even vigor, difficult as that quality is to attain, is that subtle, mysterious quality known as elegance. Just what elegance is, or

just how it is to be attained, no one has ever been able precisely to say. It is that subtle, mysterious something which lurks somewhere in a great writer's style, and which delights even his most fastidious reader. Undoubtedly it is mainly the product of genius, for it demands both the sense of harmony that is quick to utilize whatever of sound and rhythm will help to make perfect the music of word and phrase, and also the power that sees, back of the mere meanings of words, the ideas words suggest, and the moods words produce. The desire to attain elegance urges a writer on to the attainment of something higher and better than he ever can or will attain. By urging a writer on to the attainment of an unattainable perfection, however, elegance does enable him to make a better use of the means at his command than he would otherwise be able to make. It is for this reason that elegance has been said to be the most exquisite adaptation possible of means to end. How little is it to be wondered at, then, that the thing cannot be caught in the net of a definition!

Some little way toward elegance, however, every student can go. Ease in writing, if you cannot go far on the way toward elegance, which at its best is still a sort of imperfection just this side of perfection itself, you can reach by persistent effort. It is certainly within your power, in other words, to take infinite pains in the composition of your themes, to read aloud what you write, or, better, to hear a friend read it, to imitate the finish of good prose, to store in the memory some few gems of the best prose and poetry, and by these and other means to detect in your writing, and to remove from it, those harshnesses of sound and rhythm that are likely to irritate your readers. But it is far better if you are not content with

this little, because then you are more likely to develop some part of that power which will enable you to keep your mind open to things of beauty everywhere — in life and in art — and, by *living* as much as you can, to win something of the splendor of speech which elegance gives to him who sees.



PART III
KINDS OF WRITING

THE FOUR KINDS OF WRITING

THERE are four kinds of writing : Narration, description, explanation,¹ and argument. Thus far your work has had to do mainly with explanation,² although nothing has been said about explanation as one of the four kinds of writing. Stated broadly, it may be said that the purpose of narration is to tell a story, that the purpose of description is to tell how persons or things look, that the purpose of explanation is to make more definite the nature of certain thoughts, and that the purpose of argument is to convince others of the truth or falsity of certain thoughts. An account of Lincoln's boyhood, for instance, would be a narrative ; a portrayal in words of Lincoln's awkward appearance in opening the debate at Freeport would be a description ;³ a clear statement of Lincoln's views on the emancipation of slaves would be an explanation ; an attempt to prove that Lincoln issued his emancipation proclamation at the right time would be an argument. These four kinds of writing, you observe, fall naturally into two groups. Thus, narration and description are alike in so far as they deal mainly with the outer world of acts and events or of persons and things, and explanation and argument are alike in so far as

¹ Explanation is sometimes called exposition.

² Chapters II and III are based on the explanatory paragraph and the explanatory sentence.

³ See Exercise 23 (last selection). There, however, narration is combined with description.

they deal mainly with the inner world of thoughts and the relation of thoughts. More often than not, moreover, narration and description appeal to the emotions, their object being chiefly to *move* the reader, while explanation and argument appeal to the understanding, their object being chiefly to *teach* the reader. Though thus distinct in theory, these four kinds of writing, as you will learn later on, run into each other more or less in practice. Indeed, they are so combined and even so confused in practice that it is quite impossible at times to distinguish between them. In fact, a long, unmixed specimen of any of these four kinds of writing is hard to find, and it is therefore the custom to call a given piece of writing a narrative, a description, and so on, if narration, if description, and so on, happen to predominate in that particular piece of writing. Though, for this reason, these four terms are next to worthless as a means for classifying what has already been written, they are of actual service in learning to write.

For a time, however, we shall postpone our study of these four kinds of writing, and take up the important and practical matter of letter-writing, in which may be employed any or all of the four kinds of writing.

CHAPTER V

LETTER-WRITING

SECTION 50

The Importance of Letter-Writing

PROBABLY few of you who read this book will enter those professions in which authorship, in one way or another, is a means of maintenance, but all of you will, and do even now, write letters. Much the greater part of what most people write, it is safe to say, is in the form of letters, having to do either with private or with public matters. Only the illiterate write no letters, and even they are sometimes obliged to have letters written for them. It is of utmost importance, then, that you should know how to write good letters. In the whole art of writing, in fact, you will find no work that will stand you in better stead in the affairs of life than the work of letter-writing.

You write a letter in order that you may send to some person at a distance a message which you cannot communicate by word of mouth. Were you to talk to that person, you would doubtless try to deliver your message clearly, in order that it might be understood, and tactfully and courteously, in order that it might be pleasantly received. Now, precisely the same spirit should control you in composing your written messages. These should be legible, clear, tactful and courteous, sincere and unstudied. Every letter you write, to put the matter in a somewhat different

light, is your personal representative, and should make the same earnest effort at a perfect manner as you yourself would make were you to meet the person you write to, and talk with him face to face.

Furthermore, as was said at the beginning of this book,¹ older people are ever likely to judge your breeding and training by the sort of language you use in speaking and writing. This fact has a peculiar bearing on your letters, since they may be read many times over, and may reveal defects that might not be noticed in ordinary conversation. It pays, then, to take pains with your letters. This is as true of the letters you write to your friends and relatives as it is of the letters you write to strangers. Your letters may bring you political, social, or literary distinction, they may win for you positions of honor and trust, they may make and keep friends for you, or they may lose for you these things — and many more besides.

SECTION 51

The Parts of a Letter

Not all letters have precisely the same form, but every complete letter has the following parts: —

THE HEADING.

This tells where and when the letter is written.

THE INTRODUCTION.

This gives the name and the address of the person to whom the letter is sent; also the greeting.

THE BODY OF THE LETTER.

This is the message sent.

THE CONCLUSION.

This contains the courteous close and the writer's signature.

THE SUPERScription.

This is the matter put on the envelope for the delivery of the letter.

¹ Read again what is said at p. xxiii.

1. *The Heading.*—The heading tells where and when the letter is written, and is usually placed an inch or so from the top of the page, and well over toward the right-hand edge. It may occupy one, two, or even three lines, according to taste and the amount of matter it contains. A comma is placed after each separate item, and a period after each abbreviation and at the close. This punctuation is required because the heading, if written out, would read something like this: "This letter was written at Mountain View, Cal., and on March 21, 1902." The name of the month may be abbreviated,¹ but never represented by a figure, as no one likes to be forced to think out the date. Indeed, it sometimes takes more effort to substitute in the mind the name for the figure than most of us care to acknowledge. Besides, there is some chance of mistake, especially if a letter has been put aside for a time, and then looked up. Thus, 6/8/02 may mean either June 8, 1902, or 6 August, 1902. If the writer lives in a city, he should give the name and the number of his street; if he lives in a village, the name of his county. Some prefer, in writing a friendly letter, to place the heading below the signature, and at the left-hand edge of the page. This is perhaps permissible where monograms and address dies are used, though it is not to be recommended. Nothing is gained, certainly, by separating place and date, as is sometimes done, and putting the place at the head of the letter and the date at the end of the letter.

¹ The abbreviations commonly used are these: *Jan.*, *Feb.*, *Mar.*, *Apr.*, *Aug.*, *Sept.*, *Oct.*, *Nov.*, and *Dec.* *May*, *June*, and *July*, however, should never be abbreviated, and it is better to write *March* and *April* in full.



- (1) Hartford, Conn., Aug. 16, 1901.
- (2) Evanston, Illinois,
May 26, 1899.
- (3) 12 Somerset Street,
Boston, Mass.,
Feb. 6, 1899.
- (4) Hartley, O'Brien Co., Iowa,
October 8, 1902.

2. *The Introduction.*—The introduction gives the name and the address of the person to whom the letter is sent, together with the greeting, or salutation. The first line of the address, if not omitted altogether, as it sometimes is in letters to relatives and intimate friends, should begin just below the last line of the heading, and at the left-hand side of the page, about an inch, or less, from the edge of the paper. The margin thus left should be kept on every page of the letter. Each line of the address should begin a little to the right of the line preceding, a comma being placed after each item and line except the last, and a period after the abbreviations and at the close. In less formal style than that of merely commercial letters, the address may be placed below the signature, and at the left-hand side of the page. The two lines of the address in (2) below might be so placed.

The greeting, or salutation, which is used out of respect for the person addressed, shows by its form the degree of intimacy existing between the person written to and the writer. It therefore ranges from extreme formality to extreme familiarity; from such phrases as *Sir, My dear Sir, Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Gentlemen, My dear Madam, Dear Madam, Ladies*, to such phrases as *My dear Friend*,¹

¹ *Friend* is not to be used as an adjective; e.g. *Friend Smith, Friend James*, etc.

My dear Tom, Dear Dorothy, Dear Uncle David, My dear Father, Dear Mother, and so on. Halfway between the two extremes come such forms as, *Dear Mr. Foster, Dear Miss Manners, My dear Mrs. Markham, My dear Miss Hunter.* *My*, wherever it is used, seems to add just the least shade of formality. *Gentlemen* would better be reserved for correspondence not merely commercial, for letters addressed to lawyers, officers of an institution, and so on, *Dear Sirs* being in rather better form for commercial letters.

As to the position of the greeting, as well as to the punctuation that should be placed after it, there is some difference of opinion, the usages that are to be preferred being shown in the following examples:¹—

(1)	(2)
The Wagner Typewriter Co., 218-220 Broadway, New York City.	Mr. Thomas D. Boyd, Baton Rouge, La.
Dear Sirs: In reply, etc.	Dear Sir, Your letter, etc.
(or)	(3)
Dear Sirs: In reply, etc.	My dear Friend, Thoughts of you, etc.
(or)	
Dear Sirs, In reply, etc.	

¹ Observe the mark of punctuation after the greeting in each example. Where a considerable degree of formality is desired, the colon may be used. This mark is certainly to be preferred after *Sir, Sirs,* and *Gentlemen.* It should also be used where the greeting is followed on the same line by the first line of the body of the letter. In all other cases, however, it seems better to use the comma, and this simpler custom is fast gaining ground. There can be no reason whatever for using a dash after either the comma or the colon in this position.

3. *The Body of the Letter.* — The body of the letter is the message sent, and should be made to conform in every particular to the principles of good writing. As shown in the examples just given, the body of the letter begins immediately after the greeting, and on the same line, or on the line below the greeting, and immediately under the point where the greeting ends. There should be a margin of about an inch, or less, at the left, and a similar margin at the right, both margins to be continued throughout the letter. If the letter can be written on a single page, it adds to the appearance of the letter if as much margin is left at the top of the page as at the bottom. If more than one page is written on, each page after the first should be numbered. On a four-page sheet of paper, the order of the pages may be that of a book, — one, two, three, and four; or, for a two-page letter, one and three, or one and four; or, for a three-page letter, one, three, and two, the lines on page two following the length of the paper. A convenient page order for the typewriter,¹ when a four-page sheet is used, is one and four, the letter being continued on pages two and three, the lines on the latter pages beginning on the left-hand side of page two and following the length of the paper.

4. *The Conclusion.* — The conclusion contains the courteous close and the writer's signature. The courteous close is written on the line below the last line of the body of the letter, and should begin considerably to the right of the page, or immediately under the point at which the

¹ It is no longer necessary to apologize for typewriting a friendly letter, provided you do not dictate the letter. A dictated letter dealing with personal matters shows a want of consideration for the person addressed.

last line of the body of the letter ends, if this does not crowd the writing too much. The first word should begin with a capital letter, and a comma should follow the last word. The courteous close, like the greeting, is used out of respect or affection for the person written to, and shows by its form the degree of intimacy that exists between the correspondents. Like the greeting, it ranges from extreme formality to extreme familiarity. The phrases most used are these: *Yours truly*, *Very truly yours* (perhaps the most used of all), *Respectfully yours* (to be used only when special respect is intended), *Sincerely yours*, *Very sincerely yours*, *Cordially yours*, *Faithfully yours*, *Your sincere friend*, *Affectionately yours*, *Your affectionate daughter*, *Yours, with love*, *Your loving son*, etc., etc. *I remain* (which implies some previous correspondence between the parties) and *I am* (which should be used only in a first letter) do not form a part of the courteous close, and should therefore follow immediately the last sentence of the body of the letter.

The writer's signature, which should be as legible as the writer can make it, is written on the line below the courteous close, beginning somewhat farther to the right. If the letter is written to a stranger, the signature should show how the writer is to be addressed in the reply. The person addressed is bound to accept the signature as the proper name of the writer, and if the writer puts "Fred" or "Jack" in his signature, he should expect "Fred" or "Jack" in the reply. The signature, moreover, should not vary in different letters; there is no reason why it should not be the writer's legal signature. Some embarrassment is saved the recipient of the letter, also, if the signature is so written as either to indicate or to imply the proper title of the writer, whether *Mr.*, *Miss*, or

Mrs. The following examples show how this may be accomplished :—

- (1) Horace Montague.
- (2) [The signature of a girl or an unmarried woman.]
(Miss) Montague. [Eldest daughter.]
(Miss) Helen Montague. [Younger daughter.]
- (3) [The signature of a widow who prefers not to retain her husband's name.]
(Mrs.) Helen Montague.
- (4) [The signature of a married woman whose husband is living.]
Helen Montague.

Mrs. Chester Montague,
87 Eutaw Place,
Baltimore, Md.

In formal letters it is always better to follow good usage in this matter of conclusions, but in intimate letters to friends the writer may be as original as he please. A glance at almost any collection of letters will show how the most delightful letter writers vary this part of their letters. Here are a few examples taken quite at random from a volume of Walter Savage Landor's letters :—

Your sincere, affectionate friend,
W. S. L.

Ever most affectionately yours,
W. S. Landor.

Believe me ever, dear Rose,
Your affectionate
W. S. Landor.

It sometimes rains at Wisbaden—and rainy days are writing days—you make them the pleasantest of all days to

W. S. Landor.

Ever and everywhere faithfully yours,
W. S. L.

Now blessings on you and yours,
my ever kind friend,
W. S. L.

5. *The Superscription.* — The superscription includes the matter put on the envelope for the delivery of the letter, and therefore repeats the inside address, giving the name of the person addressed, the number and the name of the street (in the case of cities), the name of the city or the village or the post-office, the name of the county (in the case of villages), and the name of the state.¹ The superscription should be written with extreme care as to legibility, as each year thousands and thousands of letters are either missent, and thus delayed in reaching the person for whom they were intended, or go to the Dead Letter Office, and in many cases never reach their destination. The name of the person addressed should be written in about the middle of the envelope, and with about as much space at the right as at the left, and each following line of the superscription should begin an even distance to the right of the preceding line. The superscription should be punctuated as the title-page of a book is punctuated, with periods after the abbreviations, and commas between all items except those at the ends of the lines : —

- (1) Mr. W. H. Moore
 Brockport
 Monroe Co.
 New York
- (2) Perry Pictures People
 Malden
 Box 228 Massachusetts
- (3) The Review of Reviews Co.
 18 Astor Place
 New York City

¹ In the case of a few of the leading cities, like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc., the name of the state may probably be omitted.

NOTE. — The folding of the letter requires attention. The highest grade linen papers are made in several sizes, with envelopes to match, and are intended to be folded once, the bottom of the four-page sheet being brought up to the top. The sheet thus folded is then placed in the envelope with the open edges outward, so that, when the envelope is opened, the letter may be taken out with the first page, after the bottom has been brought down from the top, facing the reader. This method avoids the inconvenience the reader is often put to, after he has taken the letter from the envelope, of turning the letter several times over and about before the first page comes into view. The same principle should govern the folding of full sized letter paper (about 8 x 10½ inches). The bottom of the sheet should be brought up to the top, or far enough toward the top to fit the length of the envelope, and the folded sheet folded twice more, first over from the right, and then over from the left, the last two folds being made to fit the width of the envelope. The letter thus folded should then be put into the envelope in such a manner that, when the envelope is opened at the end to the right, the open edges of the letter will come out first, the last fold facing the reader. Commercial paper (about 5 x 8 inches) should be folded twice, to fit the width of the envelope, first up from the bottom, and then down from the top, and put into the envelope in such manner that, when the envelope is opened at the end to the right, the last fold will come out facing the reader.

SECTION 52

Business Letters

Though a business letter is the easiest of all letters to write, the utmost care must be taken to avoid mistakes, since mistakes in business letters often cost dearly in time and money. In a business letter the business in hand is plunged into and got done with as soon as possible. No more is said than needs to be said, and what is said is said in the fewest possible words, and in the clearest possible words. A business man, who often reads and dictates scores of letters in a single day, has no time to bother his head over

matter that does not relate to the business in hand, nor has he the time or the patience to turn obscure language into clear thought. If he finds language that admits of two or more meanings, he quite naturally feels that he has the right to interpret such language in his own favor, and delays and misunderstandings, if not lawsuits, are the result. A business letter, like every other letter, should be courteous. It is not courteous to put into a business letter matter that does not pertain to the business in hand, nor is it courteous to abbreviate every other word in such a letter. A business letter is not a telegram. Ordinarily any seeming rudeness or brusqueness may be avoided by attention to the greeting and the courteous close. Other things to be remembered are, to answer business letters by return mail, or at least to send by return mail an acknowledgment of their receipt, to acknowledge enclosures, to answer all questions, and to keep a copy of each business letter you write.

Observe that in the following example of a business letter every part of a complete letter is used.

[Printed Letter Head]

204 PINE STREET, COR. BATTERY,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.,¹
Aug. 31, 1901.

Mr. H. H. PALMER,
Palo Alto, Cal.

DEAR SIR,

Yours of the 30th inst. received. As you request, we are sending to-day, under another cover, samples of envelopes, and herewith enclose sheets of prices from which we shall be pleased to give you a discount of 50 per cent in lots of 1000.

¹ The name and the address of the firm are contained in the printed letter head.

Trusting that among these samples you will find an envelope that suits you, and hoping in due time to receive your order, we are,

Very truly yours,

Dictated by U.

PAYOT, UPHAM, & Co.

(Enclosure.)

Exercise 58

1. Your school literary society has voted to subscribe for one year to *Success*. As secretary of the society, write to The Success Company, 700 University Building, New York, giving directions for sending the paper, and enclosing money order for \$1.00.

2. Write to the principal of some high school in your state, and propose a debate between your school and his. Make some suggestion about preliminary matters.

3. You are to spend the summer at Devil's Lake, Wisconsin. Write to the proprietor of the Lake View Hotel, at that place, asking for rates. Write the proprietor's answer. Write again, engaging room and board by the week. Arrange for holding the room until you arrive.

4. Write to your grocer, ordering the following articles: 1 bag flour 5 lbs. pearline; 1 gal. maple syrup; 4 qts. lima beans; 5 lbs. raisins 1 peck spinach greens; $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. cream of tartar; $\frac{1}{4}$ bush. potatoes.

5. Write to the congressman of your district, asking him to send your school debating society a copy of the book entitled *Constitution of the United States, Jefferson's Manual, The Rules of the House of Representatives*, etc.

6. Write for samples and prices of unglazed, white bond paper, with envelopes to match. Write again, ordering one ream of the kind you choose, Gladstone ($6\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$) or Club ($7\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$) size, and 500 envelopes to match.

7. Write to the Secretary of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., and ask him to inform you as to the requirements of admission to that university.

8. You are planning a cruise to the West Indies. Write to the Hamburg-American Line, 35-37 Broadway, New York, for illustrated pamphlets, etc.

9. Your cousin wishes to take advantage of the excursion rates from Chicago to San Francisco. She has asked you to write to Mr. John Sebastian, Passenger Traffic Manager, Rock Island System, Chi-

cago, for information as to the time limit of the ticket, stop-over privileges, and sleeping-car and dining-room car accommodations.

10. This day you have sold to Mr. J. H. Russell, Wakefield, Mass., the following bill of goods: 1 No. 7 D Typewriter Desk, roll top, quartered oak, \$45; Stack No. 106 Sectional Bookcase, mahogany, \$56.50; 1 No. 207 Colonial Rocker, mahogany and leather, \$27; 1 No. 100 Davenport Sofa, mahogany and leather, \$67.50. Write to Mr. Russell, enclosing bill. Write Mr. Russell's reply, enclosing bank draft in payment. Write to Mr. Russell again, acknowledging receipt of draft in payment; return receipted bill. Consult your copy-book or your arithmetic for the proper business forms.

11. Mr. B. B. Byxbee owes you for work done, \$18.75. Write him three letters, at intervals of fifteen days, asking him to settle the account. Send him a final notice to the effect that the account will be placed in the hands of an attorney if not settled within ten days.

12. Mr. W. A. Collins desires to borrow \$75.00 for one year at 7 per cent interest. Write him, and enclose a promissory note for him to sign. On the return of the note, duly signed, write again, enclosing your private check for the amount of the note.

13. Write to the Macmillan Company, 66 Fifth Avenue, New York, for a complete catalogue of their publications.

The Macmillan Company replies, sending the catalogue. Write the letter.

Write, ordering six books selected from the catalogue; enclose bank draft.

Write the Macmillan Company's reply.

14. You are to enter — College next September. Write to the president of the college for a catalogue.

Write the president's reply.

Having read the catalogue, write again, asking for more definite information as to entrance requirements, etc. Make your questions as definite and explicit as you can.

The president replies. He answers your questions, and requests a statement of your school work. Write his letter.

Reply to the president's letter.

The president writes, informing you that your work will admit you to the college, provided you will secure from the principal of your school a detailed statement of your work, and pass a satisfac-

tory examination in certain subjects. He names these subjects, and encloses a blank for the principal to fill out. Write the president's letter.

Reply to the president's letter, enclosing your principal's statement, and assuring the president that you will be present, in September, to take the required examination.

Write the president's reply.

SECTION 53

Postal Cards¹ and Telegrams

If a short message is to be sent by mail, a postal card is sometimes a convenient substitute for paper and envelope. The superscription written on the "address" side of a postal card is precisely the same as the superscription written on an envelope, but the message written on the reverse side of a postal card is in some respects quite different from the message written on paper to be enclosed in a sealed envelope. Owing to the limited writing space on a postal card, the greeting and the courteous close, together with the inside address, are commonly omitted. The place, date, and signature are of course indispensable, though the signature may often be reduced to mere initials. The message proper must be confined rigidly to facts, and to such facts, moreover, as will not make gossip for persons impertinent enough to read them. Secrets, matters of relationship or of friendship, and intimate personal affairs of all sorts, are not to be mentioned on postal cards.

Telegrams are commonly confined to short, concisely worded messages which require lightning speed in transmission. As only ten words may be sent for a certain

¹ "Post-card" is the British term.

sum, which varies according to distance, and as each word over ten adds just so much to the cost of the telegram, there is an economical incentive¹ to the utmost brevity consistent with clearness. The thought is therefore cut down as much as it well can be, and articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and other unimportant words are omitted wherever they are not absolutely needed to make the message intelligible. The message is also freed from dependence on punctuation marks, since the latter often change places or disappear altogether in the course of transmission.

Exercise 59

1. Write a postal card to the editor of your local paper, and ask him to stop sending you his paper.²

2. You are about to leave for Cleveland, and you want your uncle, who lives in that city, to meet you on your arrival. Write him a postal card, and render a suitable apology for not writing a letter.

3. Your class, of which you are the secretary, is to meet next Friday to choose a class pin. Send a postal-card notice of this fact to a member who has been absent from school for several days.

4. You are a subscriber to *The Youth's Companion*. Write to the publishers, Perry Mason Company, Boston, Massachusetts, and ask them to change your address. Unless you give your old address, as well as your new address, your name cannot be found in the publishers' index. This is because most publishers of periodicals index their subscribers by state and town, and not by name.

5. Write a postal card to a hackman, and ask him to call at your house in time to take you to a certain train.

6. The Overland Limited, on which you are a passenger bound for San Francisco, is wrecked a few miles out of Ogden, Utah. Walk to Ogden, and telegraph your father that you are unhurt.

7. A real estate agent sends you the following telegram: "Have

¹ Aside from the matter of economy, however, it is in questionable taste to be diffuse in a telegram.

² For postal cards use paper $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

offer of four thousand cash for your house in Mayfield, less five per cent commission. Wire¹ my expense." Telegraph your reply.

8. You are on your way to New York. Telegraph your cousin, who lives at Lake Forest, Illinois, to meet you at the Union Station, Chicago, where you will be delayed for three hours. Be explicit about the time of meeting.

9. Reduce the following telegram to ten words, or less; place, date, address, and signature are not charged for:—

WASHINGTON, D.C., Dec. 13, 1902.

Mr. G. P. BAKER,
Rutland, Vt.

On account of a serious railroad accident just outside of this city, I shall not reach Baltimore to-night.

C. W. GORHAM.

10. Telegraph to John Wanamaker, Philadelphia, and ask why certain goods have not been forwarded.

11. Telegraph, congratulating a friend who has won an oratorical contest at college.

12. Telegraph, ordering a lower berth in the sleeping-car that leaves Chicago for Denver, the 15th instant.

13. You are in St. Louis without money. Telegraph your father.

SECTION 54

Advertisements and Applications

Read the following forms, and explain their connection:—

(1) *Wanted*.—Young man to do typewriting, stenography, and clerical work; must have high school education, and live at home; chance for advancement. Apply with references, to F. Bodler, United Railroads, Market and Valencia Streets.

(2) 432 PINE STREET, SAN FRANCISCO,
Dec. 10, 1902.

DEAR SIR,

I have read your advertisement in to-day's *Chronicle*, and herewith present my application for the position in typewriting,

¹ Colloquial.

stenography, and clerical work in your office. I am now working for Messrs. Goldenberg, Bowen, and Co., at the above address, and work here will prevent my calling on you until four o'clock to-morrow.

I am eighteen years of age, and live with my mother at 1642 Fulton Street. I was graduated in May last from the Lowell High School, where, during my senior year, I took the regular commercial course in typewriting and stenography. I am not yet able to take rapid dictation, but I trust I shall improve with practice. My work here has been wholly with the typewriter.

Mr. Goldenberg has very kindly given me permission to refer to him. Last May, Dr. Hudson, Principal of the Lowell High School, gave me a letter of recommendation, which I enclose.

Regretting that I cannot call before four o'clock to-morrow, I am,

Very respectfully yours,

HENRY E. HADLEY.

Mr. F. BODLER,
United Railroads,
Market and Valentia Streets,
San Francisco.

(3)

THE LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL,
SAN FRANCISCO, May 30, 1902.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

For the last four years Henry E. Hadley has been a pupil in the Lowell High School, from which he has just been graduated. He has always been punctual in attendance, faithful in the discharge of his duties, and, in scholarship, a leader of his class.

During the past year he has given special attention to commercial studies, taking, in addition to the work required for graduation, the regular course in typewriting and stenography. He has done this with the object of fitting himself for business life, and he is now as well qualified for office work as a high school graduate is likely to be.

He is to be commended also for his unfailing courtesy and for his manly independence. He is, in the best sense of the word, a gentleman.

FRANKLIN HUDSON,
Principal, The Lowell High School.

[Printed Letter Head]

Dec. 11, 1902.

(4)

Mr. F. BODLER,
Market and Valentia Streets,
San Francisco.

MY DEAR MR. BODLER,

This will introduce to you one of my office employees, Mr. Henry E. Hadley, who has my consent to better his condition, if he can. His work here has been satisfactory in every way, and, from what I know of Mr. Hadley, I can assure you that he will appreciate any kindness you may do him.

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE F. GOLDENBERG.

Dictated by G.

[Printed Letter Head]

Dec. 11, 1902.

(5)

MY DEAR BODLER,

This morning I gave a young fellow named Hadley a letter of introduction to you, which he will probably present some time this afternoon.

Hadley has been working here since June last, with the understanding that he was to leave as soon as he got a better paying position. When he came here my office force was full, but he was so highly recommended by Dr. Hudson, the Principal of the Lowell High School, that I gave him the work he has been doing. He is one of those fellows who do more than they are paid to do, and, if you can find a place for him, I have no doubt you will be well pleased with him.

Faithfully yours,

GEORGE F. GOLDENBERG.

Mr. F. BODLER,
Market and Valentia Streets,
San Francisco.

Exercise 60

1. Write a letter applying for one of the positions advertised below. In stating your qualifications, it is well to be modest in your claims, for the best praise is the praise that comes from others. Be scrupulously attentive to the little things in letter-writing, such as spelling,

punctuation, the folding of your letter, the kind of ink and paper¹ you use, etc. Employers think, and rightly too, that a boy's or a girl's character is pretty likely to come out somewhere in a letter of application.

1. *Wanted.*—Stenographer and typewriter; state age, experience, salary, in own handwriting. Box 5831, *Chronicle*.

2. *Wanted.*—An educated, intelligent, and refined young woman to act as an attendant in a business office; state wages and give references. Box 5707, *Chronicle*.

3. *Wanted.*—Boy to learn the grocery business; should be about 16 years old, bright, active, and live at home. Call after 9 o'clock Monday, Goldenberg, Bowen, & Co., 432 Pine Street.

4. *Wanted.*—Two drug clerks; one with 2 to 4 years' experience, about 20 years old; other must be licentiate; must have good references. Apply to J. M. Wright & Co., 508 Market Street.

5. *Wanted.*—Fence letterer to accompany camping wagon through California; state experience and pay expected. Apply by letter, A. B. Thomson, San Rafael, Cal.

¹ "Within the author's knowledge," writes Mr. Carpenter, "a young man was recently refused an excellent position because his letter of application was on ruled paper. The employer decided, quite properly, that one so deficient in knowledge of the customary practice in such matters, would be deficient also in his knowledge of men and social customs in general."—G. R. CARPENTER, *Elements of Rhetoric and English Composition* (Second High School Course), 25, note. "When a young man's card comes to me," writes Mr. Walter S. Carter in *Ways that Win*, "I know him before he enters my room; if he should send in a printed one, I want to express sorrow for him here and now. The visiting card is the one infallible test of that quality which is expressed by the word gentleman; no other is so unerring, no other can be so implicitly depended on. Query: if the printed visiting card make a young man a duffer, what does a printed professional card do for a lawyer? I would give up law practice, if I couldn't make business communications on engraved letter heads, and I would be ashamed to send a printed professional card into any lawyer's office or any business place whatsoever."

2. The following is an advertisement for a situation: —

*Wanted.*¹ — By a young man, a situation as bookkeeper; understands single and double entry; high school education; good references. Address H. M., 243 Grove Street.

Write an advertisement for a situation as clerk in a law office; as typewriter and stenographer in a wholesale house; as salesman for men's furnishing goods; as travelling salesman for a wholesale candy house; as teacher in a country school; as teacher in a city grammar school; as clerk in a drug store; as attendant in a business office; as advertising solicitor; as collector for a real estate office.

SECTION 55

Official Letters

Of all letters, excepting only mere notes of invitation and reply, official letters are the most formal. They are dignified in style, and abound in conventional phrases of courtesy. Since it is really the office that is written to, and not the temporary incumbent, many prefer to place on the envelope, as well as in the introduction to the letter itself, the name of the office rather than the name of the officer. They prefer to address a letter to the President of the United States, for example, "To the President, The White House, Washington, D.C.," rather than, "To His Excellency, Theodore Roosevelt," etc. Extra formality is obtained, — in addition to that obtained by writing in as dignified a style as possible, — by due attention to titles and to the greeting and the courteous close. Titles, with

¹ Where the advertisement stands in a column with others of the same sort, the word "wanted" is commonly omitted, since the column itself is headed, "Situations Wanted," "Help Wanted," or the like.

the exception of *Mr.* and its equivalents, should be written out in full—if more than ordinary courtesy is to be shown. This applies to *Doctor, The Reverend, The Honorable* (usually applied to congressmen, governors, judges of the higher courts, and high federal officers), as well as to *Captain, Colonel, General, Professor, President, Governor*, etc., etc.¹ Formal greetings are, *Your Excellency* (if addressing the President of the United States or the Governor of a state), *Your Honor* (if addressing the Mayor of a city), *Reverend Sir* (if addressing a clergyman), *Sir* (the most usual form; it would be entirely proper in any of the above cases); formal phrases for the courteous close are, *Most respectfully your obedient servant, I have the honor to subscribe myself most respectfully, I have the honor to be (or to remain) your obedient servant, Most respectfully yours.*

Exercise 61.

1. You wish to prepare for the civil service examination in mechanical engineering. Write to the President of the Civil Service Commission, Washington, D.C., for information.
2. Your school library is in need of a good natural history. Find out the best, and petition your Board of Education to procure it for your school.
3. The newspapers report that the Governor of your state is about to pardon a notorious criminal. Write a protest.

¹ "Prof. O. P. Jenkins" is permissible, but "Prof. Jenkins" is not. This means that the family name should never be immediately preceded by an abbreviated title. Post-titles, like LL.D., D.D., etc., etc., are not much used nowadays outside of catalogues, but, if post-titles are used, they should not repeat pre-titles. It is in rather better taste to use *Mr.* in all personal letters, even to men who might be given other titles, and to reserve the latter for official letters. *Mr.* is certainly to be preferred to *Esq.*, which is British.

SECTION 56

Invitations and Replies

Invitations are of two kinds, formal and informal. Nothing need be said here, however, regarding informal invitations, because they differ in no way from the ordinary notes that pass between friends and relatives. An informal invitation must be followed by an informal reply, since the reply, in any case, invariably takes the tone of the invitation.

Formal invitations are written throughout in the third person,¹ and can be best understood by a study of the examples below. Observe that there is no heading, no introduction, and no conclusion in a formal invitation. If the address of the writer and the date are not omitted altogether, they are written below the body of the invitation, commonly at the left. The year is usually omitted, and the month and the day are sometimes written out in full, though society is not agreed on this last point. To write out in full the name of the month, as evidence that you are not in a hurry and do not grudge the time spent on your note, may be well enough, but to write out in full the day of the month ("eight" for "8") or the number of your street ("Forty-two" for "42") seems to be straining the matter to the point of affectation. To show affectation would seem to be as vulgar as to show haste, — but this is probably an affair of taste.

¹ In case the invitation is wholly engraved or printed, as in (1) below, the second person must be used, since the name of each person invited cannot be inserted in the engraved or printed form. People who entertain frequently commonly have forms engraved with spaces for names and dates, a device that saves a resort to the second person.

The reply, as suggested above, takes its tone from the invitation. The formal reply, indeed, is simply an inverted form of the formal invitation, and therefore needs no comment. A reply of any sort, formal or informal, should always be sent immediately on receipt of an invitation,¹ and, to prevent a chance of mistake, the reply should invariably repeat the date and the hour of the invitation.

(1)

The Adelphian Literary Society
requests the pleasure of your company
at its Fifteenth Annual Public
on Friday evening, January the third
at eight o'clock
The Adelphian Hall ²

(2)

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Barbour request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. John Wesley Hobb's company at dinner on Thursday, February 8, at 8 o'clock.

(3)

Mr. and Mrs. John Wesley Hobb accept with pleasure Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Barbour's kind invitation for Thursday, February 8, at 8 o'clock.

(4)

Mr. and Mrs. John Wesley Hobb regret that a previous engagement prevents them from accepting Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Barbour's kind invitation for Thursday, February 8, at 8 o'clock.

¹ The letters, *R. s. v. p.* (*Répondez si l vous plait*), or some such phrase as, "The favor of an answer is requested," "An answer is requested," or even "Please reply," are met with now and then in invitations. Such phrases, it is needless to say, are extremely offensive to persons of intelligence, since everybody is supposed to know that a *reply to an invitation is always expected — and at once.*

² Note the comparative absence of punctuation in this, the engraved form. Note also the arrangement of the lines.

(5)

Mrs. Moulton requests the pleasure of Mrs. Hudson's company at luncheon on Tuesday, October 6, at 1 o'clock.

The Lilacs,

October 3.¹

Exercise 62

1. Write an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Lord to dine with you on Tuesday next, at eight o'clock.

2. Write an acceptance to the above invitation; write a regret.

3. Miss Frances Aldrich is to give a whist party a week from Thursday, at eight o'clock. Write her invitation to Miss Marjorie Daw. Write Miss Daw's acceptance.

4. You are to give a "stag" dinner next week. Write an invitation to one of your friends. Write his acceptance.

5. Your debating society is sending out invitations to a public debate. How should you word the invitations?

SECTION 57

Friendly Letters

Friendly letters are familiar chats on paper, a trifle more restrained than a real chat would be, but still in pretty much the same tone. The tone of a friendly letter, indeed, ought to show the degree of intimacy existing between the writer and the person written to, but it is not always an easy matter to get just the right tone,

¹ This invitation suggests a gathering of ladies. An invitation to a "stag" party would run in the name of the host; "Mr. Moulton requests the pleasure of Mr. Hudson's company," etc. Note the arrangement of the lines in (2), (3), (4), and (5), which is the proper arrangement when invitations and replies are written out, and not engraved or printed. When, for obvious reasons, the writer does not wish to mention a previous engagement, but still wishes to decline, he may resort to some such wording as this: "Mr. Hudson regrets his inability to accept," etc.

neither too stiff nor too familiar. In order to get just the right tone you should write as naturally as you can. It is a good plan, therefore, to sit down and think over what you would say to your friend were that friend present. Try to imagine that your friend is actually present in the room with you, and that you are saying to him the things you know would most interest him. Jot down the thoughts that come to you in this mental chat, arrange them in an orderly way by putting together the things that are near in thought, decide what things you shall say in one paragraph and what in another, and then write out your letter as rapidly as you can, trying to make the black marks before you glow with your thought and personality much as your face would glow with your thoughts and feelings were you actually talking with the person you are now writing to. If you really cannot do this,—you can with a little practice,—at least avoid the two extremes suggested above, that is, do not be too stiff or too familiar. If you are in the habit of calling your friend “Bob,” if you have played with him, and fought with him, do not address him in your letter as “Dear Sir.” On the other hand, remember that when you have talked with him you have sometimes had to explain things that you have said, things that you did not say clearly enough for “Bob” to understand, that sometimes you have had to take back things that angered “Bob,” or modify some statement before he would believe it. Remember as you write that you cannot be present, when “Bob” reads your letter, to take back or modify anything you write, but that, when it is once written, it is written once for all, and “Bob” can read it as many times as he likes. When he meets you again there may be trouble. You know

"Bob" well enough for that. There is nothing in those black marks you make in your letters that will explain what you write, as your voice, manner, and expression will explain what you say. Therefore, moderate your emotions when you write, and do not write at all when your emotions are too excited to be moderated. Now is the time to remember the "Don'ts" of letter-writing.¹ Write about anything you and your friend are interested in, and a little, but not too much, about yourself. A bit of news that you know your friend will like to hear, the best things about your every-day life, and the most worthy of what you think and feel, these and other things that your friend will be really interested in are the proper subjects to write about.

Exercise 63

1. Your friend and classmate, Walter Vincent, has recently moved to Portland, Maine. Write him what has happened in town and at school since he left.

2. Your friend, Cecil Van Dyke, writes you from Omaha, Neb., that he will visit you at Christmas. Outline your plans for entertaining him.

3. This coming summer you are to go on a camping trip into the wilds of Canada. Your friend, Jeffrey Bowen, who lives at St. Paul, Minn., is to accompany you. Write him regarding outfit, etc.

4. Write Gilbert Thomas, who lives at Denver, Colo., an account of the Hallowe'en Party you attended recently. You may remember that the party was given by Olive Thornton, your mutual friend.

5. Write a note to your uncle, thanking him for the book he recently sent you.

6. Write one of your friends an informal invitation to luncheon on Tuesday next, at one o'clock. Submit your invitation to the class for criticism.

¹ See Section 58.

7. You have just returned from visiting your cousin at New Orleans. Write him an account of your trip home.

8. Your sister has been away from home for a week. Write her an account of the family doings during her absence.

9. Your friend, Pauline Richards, lives at Kansas City, Mo. Write her, inviting her to spend the Christmas holidays with you. Give her all needed information about trains, transfers, etc.

10. Write a letter to your brother from some place you have recently visited.

11. Imagine that you live in Honolulu. Write to your brother, and describe as well as you can the people, the climate, the products, etc., of Hawaii.

12. One of your classmates has been ill and absent from school for several weeks. Write about the work of the class since he (or she) left. Add some interesting school happening.

13. Write a letter in which you describe an imaginary visit to the South in winter.

14. Write a letter in which you give an account of a picnic, a football game, or a boating excursion.

15. Write a letter in which you give an account of a Saturday ramble.

16. Write the following letters: (1) A letter giving your opinion of a novel you have recently read; (2) A letter telling how you spent your last summer vacation; (3) A letter telling how you expect to spend your next summer vacation; (4) A letter stating your aim in life; (5) A letter in which you state your college plans—if you have any; (6) A letter giving your opinion of the profession or business you expect to enter when you have ended your school days; (7) A letter narrating an adventure; (8) A letter telling about an accident; (9) A letter describing some interesting city or country custom.

17. Now that you have finished your practice work in the writing of friendly letters, write a real letter to some friend of yours, and send it through the mails. Make use, in this letter, of what you have learned about the writing of friendly letters. You are not expected to submit this letter to any criticism but your own.

SECTION 58

Some Don'ts

Don't put secrets into letters ; they have a way of getting out when you least want them to.

Don't use I-now-take-my-pen-in-hand phrases ; if you have nothing to write, don't write it.

Don't fail to answer promptly every letter you receive which merits an answer ; promptness will help you to keep both friends and business.

Don't send off a letter with a mistake in it, whether it be of spelling, of punctuation, of fact, of etiquette, or — of cleanliness and neatness ; rewrite a letter until it is as nearly perfect as you can make it.

Don't use colored inks and papers — even though Fashion tells you to ; pure white linen paper, unruled, and black ink are in best taste for polite letter-writing.

Don't cross-line and postscript your letters (this for girls); cross-lining is in bad taste, and postscripts should be used only when they can be used with discretion and art.

Don't let the "blue devils" get into your letters ; other people have "blue devils" of their own — enough and to spare.

Don't write in the heat of passion ; wait until the intensity of your excitement, whatever it may be, subsides.

Don't forget that a written word can never be recalled.

If you are in doubt as to whether you should write some particular thing, or as to whether you should write at all, don't write until you sleep over your doubts.

NOTE. — Before you take leave of the subject of letter-writing, you should give at least a passing glance to the importance of letters to literature. The form of the letter has been used for essays (*e.g.* Hamerton's *The Intellectual Life*), novels (*e.g.* Aldrich's *Marjorie Daw* — a short story), histories (*e.g.* Russell's *History of Modern Europe*), and, in truth, nearly every kind of discourse. Even the dull subject of English Grammar has been made interesting by being put into letters to a fourteen-year-old boy (Cobbett's *English Grammar*). But it is by those collections of real letters which great men and great women have left us that you would probably be most entertained. These collections it would be well for you to make the acquaintance of, if, indeed, you have not already done so. From them you can learn how even the commonplaces of every-day existence may be made to glow with the personality of a great writer. The best letters you will find to be those which were never intended to be more than mere friendly letters, but which, because of their fine thought and finer feeling, rise to the rank of literature.

Consult such collections of letters as Scoones's *Four Centuries of English Letters* and Knight's *Half-hours with the Best Letter-Writers*, and read, for every variety of style, the letters of Steele, Lord Chesterfield, Cowper, Gray, Lamb, Thackeray, Madame de Sévigné, Goethe, Franklin, Irving, Carlyle, Emerson, Lowell, Stevenson, etc. Also, look into almost any recent biography to see how much of a man's life can be told by the letters he has written.

CHAPTER VI

NARRATION

Exercise 64

THE DEFENCE OF THE ROUNDHOUSE¹

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Alan drew a dirk, which he held in his left hand in case they should run in under his sword. I, on my part, clambered up into the berth with an armful of pistols and something of a heavy heart, and set open the window where I was to watch. It was a small part of the deck that I could overlook, but enough for our purpose. The sea had gone down, and the wind was steady and kept the sails quiet; so that there was a great stillness in the ship, in which I made sure I heard the sound of muttering voices. A little after, and there came a clash of steel upon the deck, by which I knew they were dealing out the cutlasses, and one had been let fall; and after that silence again.

I do not know if I was what you call afraid; but my heart beat like a bird's, both quick and little; and there was a dimness came before my eyes which I continually rubbed away, and which continually returned. As for hope, I had none; but only a darkness of despair and a sort of anger against all the world that made me long to sell my life as dear as I was able. I tried to pray, I remember, but that same hurry of my mind, like a man running, would not suffer me to

¹ The deck-house. Here is the situation. The crew of the brig *Covenant* have conspired to rob and murder one Alan Breck Stewart, who has come on board from an open boat which the brig struck and sent to the bottom. The conspiracy is discovered by David Balfour, a youth who is being sent by a villanous uncle to be sold to labor in the Carolina plantations. David warns Alan, and the two defend the roundhouse against the crew. This selection is printed by kind permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

think upon the words; and my chief wish was to have the thing begin and be done with it.

It came all of a sudden when it did; with a rush of feet and a roar, and then a shout from Alan, and a sound of blows and some one crying out as if hurt. I looked back over my shoulder, and saw Mr. Shuan in the doorway, crossing blades with Alan.

"That's him that killed the boy!" I cried.

"Look to your window!" said Alan; and as I turned back to my place, I saw him pass his sword through the mate's body.

It was none too soon for me to look to my own part; for my head was scarce back at the window before five men, carrying a square yard for a battering-ram, ran past me and took post to drive the door in. I had never fired with a pistol in my life, and not often with a gun; far less against a fellow-creature. But it was now or never; and just as they swang the yard, I cried out, "Take that!" and shot into their midst.

I must have hit one of them, for he sang out and gave back a step, and the rest stopped as if a little disconcerted. Before they had time to recover, I sent another ball over their heads; and at my third shot (which went as wide as the second) the whole party threw down the yard and ran for it.

Then I looked round again into the deck-house. The whole place was full of the smoke of my own firing, just as my ears seemed to be burst with the noise of the shots. But there was Alan, standing as before; only now his sword was running blood to the hilt, and himself so swelled with triumph and fallen into so fine an attitude, that he looked to be invincible. Right before him on the floor was Mr. Shuan, on his hands and knees; the blood was pouring from his mouth, and he was sinking slowly lower, with a terrible, white face; and just as I looked, some of those from behind caught hold of him by the heels and dragged him bodily out of the roundhouse. I believe he died as they were doing it.

"There's one of your Whigs for ye!" cried Alan; and then turning to me, he asked if I had done much execution.

I told him I had winged one, and thought it was the captain.

"And I've settled two," says he. "No, there's not enough blood let; they'll be back again. To your watch, David. This was but a dram before meat."

I settled back to my place, recharging the three pistols I had fired, and keeping watch with both eye and ear.

Our enemies were disputing not far off upon the deck, and that so loudly that I could hear a word or two above the washing of the seas.

"It was Shuan bauchled¹ it," I heard one say.

And another answered him with a "Wheesht, man! He's paid the piper."

After that the voices fell again into the same muttering as before. Only now, one person spoke most of the time, as though laying down a plan, and first one and then another answered him briefly, like men taking orders. By this, I made sure they were coming on again, and told Alan.

"It's what we have to pray for," said he. "Unless we can give them a good distaste of us, and done with it, there'll be nae sleep for either you or me. But this time, mind, they'll be in earnest."

By this, my pistols were ready, and there was nothing to do but listen and wait. While the brush lasted, I had not the time to think if I was frightened; but now, when all was still again, my mind ran upon nothing else. The thought of the sharp swords and the cold steel was strong in me; and presently, when I began to hear stealthy steps and a brushing of men's clothes against the roundhouse wall, and knew they were taking their places in the dark, I could have found it in my mind to cry out aloud.

All this was upon Alan's side; and I had begun to think my share of the fight was at an end, when I heard some one drop softly on the roof above me.

Then there came a single call on the sea-pipe, and that was the signal. A knot of them made one rush of it, cutlass in hand, against the door; and at the same moment, the glass of the skylight was dashed in a thousand pieces, and a man leaped through and landed on the floor. Before he got his feet, I had clapped a pistol to his back, and might have shot him, too; only at the touch of him (and him alive) my whole flesh misgave me, and I could no more pull the trigger than I could have flown.

He had dropped his cutlass as he jumped, and when he felt the pistol, whipped straight round and laid hold of me, roaring out an oath; and at that either my courage came again, or I grew so much

¹ Bungled. — Stevenson.

afraid as came to the same thing; for I gave a shriek and shot him in the midst of the body. He gave the most horrible, ugly groan and fell to the floor. The foot of the second fellow, whose legs were dangling through the skylight, struck me at the same time upon the head; and at that I snatched another pistol and shot this one through the thigh, so that he slipped through and tumbled in a lump on his companion's body. There was no talk of missing, any more than there was time to aim; I clapped the muzzle to the very place and fired.

I might have stood and stared at them for long, but I heard Alan shout as if for help, and that brought me to my senses.

He had kept the door so long; but one of the seamen, while he was engaged with others, had run in under his guard and caught him about the body. Alan was dirking him with his left hand, but the fellow clung like a leech. Another had broken in and had his cutlass raised. The door was thronged with their faces. I thought we were lost, and catching up my cutlass, fell on them in flank.

But I had not time to be of help. The wrestler dropped at last; and Alan, leaping back to get his distance, ran upon the others like a bull, roaring as he went. They broke before him like water, turning, and running, and falling one against another in their haste. The sword in his hands flashed like quicksilver into the huddle of our fleeing enemies; and at every flash there came the scream of a man hurt. I was still thinking we were lost, when lo! they were all gone, and Alan was driving them along the deck as a sheepdog chases sheep.

Yet he was no sooner out than he was back again, being as cautious as he was brave; and meanwhile the seamen continued running and crying out as if he was still behind them; and we heard them tumble one upon another into the forecastle, and clap-to the hatch upon the top.

HELPS TO STUDY: This selection is a part of chapter x, *Kidnapped*. If you own the book, bring it to the class, and be prepared to read chapters ix and x to the other members of the class. In chapter viii you will find a brief description of the roundhouse; also in chapter ix. What do you learn about Alan from the present selection? What do you learn about David? Point out words or phrases which express action; as, "Alan drew a dirk." There are two attacks. With what paragraph does each begin? Where does the first end? How does

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighborhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no new-comers. Indeed, you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humored as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant, like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way! You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

"Ah! you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighborhood."

"It will be of no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

HELPS TO STUDY: What is the purpose of this chapter? What general impression does it make on your mind? What do the first two paragraphs do? Might they just as well have been left out? What do you learn about Mr. Bingley? How and where do you learn this? What do you learn about Mr. Bennet? About Mrs. Bennet? About their daughters? Note what the author says, in the last paragraph, about Mr. Bennet. Do any of the characteristics there mentioned appear in his conversation? Where? Do the characteristics mentioned by the author as belonging to Mrs. Bennet appear in her conversation? Where? Read the chapter once more, pausing at the end of each speech to ask yourself these questions: *What* does this speech tell me? *Whom* does it tell me about? *How* does it tell me what it does?

Exercise 66

KAA'S HUNTING

BY RUDYARD KIPLING

The moon was sinking behind the hills, and the lines of trembling monkeys huddled together on the walls and battlements looked like ragged shaly fringes of things. Baloo went down to the tank for a drink, and Bagheera began to put his fur in order, as Kaa glided out into the centre of the terrace and brought his jaws together with a ringing snap that drew all the monkeys' eyes upon him.

"The moon sets," he said. "Is there yet light to see?"

From the walls came a moan like the wind in the tree-tops: "We see, O Kaa!"



"Good! Begins now the Dance — the Dance of the Hunger of Kaa. Sit still and watch."

He turned twice or thrice in a big circle, weaving his head from right to left. Then he began making loops and figures of eight with his body, and soft, oozy triangles that melted into squares and five-sided figures, and coiled mounds, never resting, never hurrying, and never stopping his low, humming song. It grew darker and darker, till at last the dragging, shifting coils disappeared, but they could hear the rustle of the scales.

Baloo and Bagheera stood still as stone, growling in their throats, their neck-hair bristling, and Mowgli watched and wondered.

"Bander-log," said the voice of Kaa at last, "can ye stir foot or hand without my order? Speak!"

"Without thy order we cannot stir foot or hand, O Kaa!"

"Good! Come all one pace nearer to me."

The lines of the monkeys swayed forward helplessly, and Baloo and Bagheera took one stiff step forward with them.

"Nearer!" hissed Kaa, and they all moved again.

Mowgli laid his hands on Baloo and Bagheera to get them away, and the two great beasts started as though they had been waked from a dream.

"Keep thy hand on my shoulder," Bagheera whispered. "Keep it there, or I must go back — must go back to Kaa. *Aah!*"

"It is only old Kaa making circles on the dust," said Mowgli; "let us go;" and the three slipped off through a gap in the walls to the jungle.

"*Whoof!*" said Baloo, when he stood under the still trees again. "Never more will I make an ally of Kaa," and he shook himself all over.

"He knows more than we," said Bagheera, trembling. "In a little time, had I stayed, I should have walked down his throat."

"Many will walk that road before the moon rises again," said Baloo. "He will have good hunting — after his own fashion."

HELPS TO STUDY: Read the chapter entitled "Kaa's Hunting," in *The Jungle Book*, for what goes before and after the present selection. Be prepared to tell the whole story of Kaa's hunting to the class. Who is Kaa? Bagheera? Baloo? Mowgli? How do the

characters in this selection differ from the characters in the preceding selections? See what is said at the beginning of Exercise 72.¹

SECTION 59

The Nature of Narration

From what has already been said about narration,² you know that the purpose of narration is to tell a story, and that narration, like description, deals mainly with the outer world of persons and things. Between narration and description, however, this distinction may be drawn: In narration the details are commonly brought in one after another in the order of time, in description the details are brought in in the order in which one would be most likely to see them;³ in narration the action of persons and things is of prime importance, in description the appearance of persons and things is of prime importance; narration tells what persons and things do, description tells us how they look. Thus, narration becomes a record of happenings, real — as in history and biography, or seeming real — as in fiction.

To illustrate: Note how each event in the following simple narrative appears in the order in which it happened; (1) the fishing for minnows, (2) the trampling of the place into a quagmire, (3) the proposal to build a wharf, (4) the pointing out of the heap of stones, (5) the assembling of the boys for work, and so forth: —

¹ For further study of the narrative, see *My First Entry into Philadelphia* (Exercise 17), *An Ice-Quake* (Exercise 20), *The Slide* (Exercise 42); also Exercises 18 (1), 19 (5), 23, 26 (first selection), 34 (third selection; a narrative with explanatory purpose), 36 (second paragraph of selection; illustrates use of historical present in narration).

² At the beginning of Part III.

³ This is explained in Section 70.

NOTHING IS USEFUL WHICH IS NOT HONEST

There was a salt-marsh that bounded part of the mill-pond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for minnows. By much trampling we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharf there, fit for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my playfellows, and working with them diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharf. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which were found in our wharf. Inquiry was made after the removers. We were discovered and complained of. Several of us were corrected by our fathers; and, though I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest. — FRANKLIN, *Autobiography*.

Not only does each event appear in the order in which it happened, but the important thing about the whole story is what the boys did, and not how they looked; the narrative is clearly a record of happenings, — in this case, of real happenings, — and time and action are the heart of it. And this is true always of pure narration.

SECTION 60

The Elements of Narration

Every narrative, whether real or seeming real, has four elements: “(1) the plot — that is, what happened; (2) the characters — that is, the persons to whom it happened; (3) the situation — that is, the place where and the time when it happened; (4) the purpose — or the reason why the author tells us that it happened. Corresponding to these four elements are four test questions, which we shall do well, for a while, to ask ourselves in regard to

every narrative we write or read: (1) What? (2) Who? (3) Where and when? (4) Why?"¹

These four elements of narration it will be worth while to consider separately, as a knowledge of them is essential to the writing of a good narrative or the telling of a good story. To know how to tell a good story, or how to write a good narrative, is to know how to make the best use of those personal experiences which you tell about, or write about, in talk or in friendly letter, nearly every day of your life.

SECTION 61

The Purpose

Although the purpose of a narrative is likely to be the last thing to be understood by the reader, it is ordinarily the first thing to be understood by the writer.² The purpose, as has already been said, is the reason why the author tells us that the thing he recounts happened; the purpose is the author's chief motive for telling his story. It is the purpose, indeed, that determines what sort of plot shall be put into a narrative, what kind of characters shall be concerned in the plot, and, if the time and the place of the narrative are not determined by the plot itself, where and when the plot shall be represented as taking place.

¹ Fletcher and Carpenter, *Introduction to Theme-Writing*, chap. iv.

² Mr. Bates, however, thinks not. "Sometimes he [the author] is aware of the central purpose first," writes Mr. Bates, "especially in fiction written with a declared motive; but this does not appear to be the natural order in the case of fiction really imaginative. An author must of course have a comprehension of the central motive before he begins to write, but he deduces it from his plot rather than forms a plot to embody the idea." — ARLO BATES, *Talks on Writing English*, chap. xvi.

The purpose of a narrative may range anywhere between the two extremes of mere amusement and instruction. Thus, Franklin's purpose in telling of his first entry into Philadelphia (Exercise 17) was quite different from Stevenson's purpose in narrating the imaginary defence of the roundhouse (Exercise 64). Franklin, though he desired to make his narrative as entertaining as he could, desired primarily to give information about an incident in his own life, while Stevenson, though he chose to give a bit of information about seafaring life of the eighteenth century, desired above all things else to entertain his readers with experiences out of the run of ordinary everyday life. Franklin wrote a kind of history; Stevenson wrote an out-and-out fiction. The purpose of each author was perfectly legitimate, but the two narratives, determined in content and style by the two different purposes, are as different as the real and the seeming real always are.

Whatever your purpose in writing a narrative, then, whether it be to instruct or merely to amuse, or partly to instruct and partly to amuse, you will do well to fix your purpose as clearly in your mind as you can, and that too before you set about the work of writing. Think how, with your purpose, you can best handle the material at your command, which, even for the simplest narrative, is often so abundant as to confuse — memory groups such hosts of associations about real events, and imagination conjures up as many about fancied events.

Exercise 67

1. What is the purpose of each of the selections in Exercises 65-66? Of *An Ice-Quake* (Exercise 20)? Of *The Slide* (Exercise 42)?

2. State the purpose of any one of the following works: Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*; Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*; Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*; Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield*; Hughes, *Tom Brown's School-days*; Longfellow, *Evangeline*; Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*; Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*; Shakspere, *Merchant of Venice*; Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Trevelyan, *Life of Macaulay*.

3. What is the purpose of Scott's *Lochinvar*? Of Browning's *Incident of the French Camp*? Of Whittier's *Snow-Bound*?

Exercise 68

Name some narrative, not named here, whose purpose is merely to amuse. Name another whose purpose is to instruct. Name another whose purpose is to amuse and at the same time to represent human nature. Name some narrative whose purpose is to instruct by giving a simple record of facts. Find a chapter in your school history whose purpose is to narrate the events leading up to some greater event. Do you think of any story written to teach a moral?

SECTION 62

The Plot

The plot—that is, what happened—is the most important part of a narrative. Without a plot there can be no story. The trouble with—

I'll tell you a story
About Mother Morey
And now my story's begun;
I'll tell you another
About her brother,
And now my story's done,

is that nothing happens. This is of course the point of the nonsense, and as nonsense verses the lines are good enough. But nevertheless the lines tell no story. Now, if you are to tell a story, you must have a story to tell—

you must have a plot. This plot may be as simple as the plot in

Four-and-twenty sailors
Went to kill a snail,

or as complicated as the plot in a book like Dickens' *David Copperfield*, but plot of some sort there must be.

Between a simple and a complicated plot, however, there is an important structural difference. In a simple plot, for instance, the details are commonly brought in one after another in the order of time, as in Franklin's little story in Section 59. Chronicle histories, most biographies, most short stories,¹ and now and then a fiction of some length² follow this time order, and have simple plots. Pure narration invariably follows the time order. But narration as it is ordinarily written, running more or less into description and explanation, and even into argument, frequently departs from the strict time order, and often enough a complicated plot is the result. In a complicated plot two or more sets of characters are brought into the narrative in such a way that the events in which one set of characters is concerned take place at the same time that the events in which some other set of characters is concerned take place. These events, though they happen at the same time, cannot be told at the same time. The author must keep each set of characters distinct until such time as their interests meet and mingle. Thus, in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, the first two chapters tell about Marner at Lantern Yard and Raveloe, the third chapter gives the conversation between Godfrey and Dunstan, the fourth relates the hunt and the robbery, the fifth

¹ Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* is an example. Mention others.

² One of the best examples is Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

recounts Marner's discovery of the robbery, the sixth is concerned with the group at the tavern, the seventh brings Marner to the tavern and unites for the moment the interests of the hero and the interests of the men at the tavern. The robbery, we know, occurred while the men at the tavern were airing their theories about ghosts, but it had to be told, nevertheless, in a chapter by itself.¹ Now, this sort of plot it would be well to leave to experienced writers; your own narratives had better be confined to those simple plots in which the events follow each other in a strictly time order.

One other matter must not be forgotten. If the happenings you relate are real happenings, they must in every detail conform to the truth. If, on the contrary, the happenings you relate are the creations of your own imagination, they must be made as plausible as it is in your ability to make them. They must be consistent. They must "hang together." They must be "seeming real." To make such happenings "seeming real," they must to you seem real while you are putting them into your story. Then your readers will think that the happenings you relate, imagined though they be, *might* nevertheless have happened, had the characters you portray been placed in the situation you have placed them in. That is, three-headed giants and cats that turn into witches are plausible and consistent enough in the world of fairy; in the world of men, however, they are neither plausible nor consistent. In other words, truth is the test of all narration that has to do with real happenings, and plausibility, or consistency, is the test of all narration that has to do with imagined happenings.

¹ What other complications do you find in the plot of *Silas Marner*?

clansmen, the Appin Stewarts, to their chief Ardsheel, living in exile in France. Hoseason and his crew, learning that Alan had gold about him, conspired to rob and murder him; but David, being made privy to the plot, put Alan on his guard and promised to stand by him. Favored by the shelter of the roundhouse, and by Alan's courage and skill of fence, the two got the better of their assailants in the attack which followed, killing or maiming more than half of them;¹ whereby Captain Hoseason was disabled from prosecuting his voyage, and came to terms with Alan, agreeing to land him on a part of the coast whence he might best make his way to his own country of Appin. But in attempting this the *Covenant* took ground and sank off the coast of Mull. Those on board saved themselves as best they could — David separately, being first cast on the Isle of Earraid, etc.

SECTION 63

The Characters

You have already learned something about the characters in narration.² You have learned that they may be almost anything, from men to machines,³ and that the best way to introduce them to your reader is to set them to doing something. Therefore, set your characters to doing something right away, and see to it that what they do is in keeping with their natures. Make the miser hoard his gold, make the cruel man do cruel things, and make the swaggerer blow and brag. Make your characters as striking and lifelike as you can, with red, warm blood flowing through their veins. To do this, you will have to get intimately acquainted with them, you will have to talk with them and walk about with them, before ever you put them into your story. If they exist vividly for you, they will most likely exist vividly for your readers.

¹ See Exercise 64.

² See Exercise 65.

³ Read Kipling's 007, in which the characters are railroad locomotives.

Many characters you will not have the space to develop in the short stories you will be likely to write. Two or three characters distinctly developed, with such individuals in the background as are necessary by contrast or otherwise to bring out your principal character or characters, will probably be the most you can well do. Close observation of the people about you, and some study of the methods used by the best short story writers for delineating character, will teach you the best way to go about the work.

Exercise 71

1. CLASS EXERCISE : Study the character development in the selections printed in Exercises 64, 65, and 66.

2. Find out all you can about one of the following characters, and then write a theme of two or three paragraphs in which you describe fully the means used to develop the character you select: Moses Primrose (*Vicar of Wakefield*); Sydney Carton (*A Tale of Two Cities*); Uncas (*Last of the Mohicans*); Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*); John Silver (*Treasure Island*); Hepzibah (*House of Seven Gables*); Sheik Ilderim (*Ben Hur*); Roderick Dhu (*Lady of the Lake*); Jeremy Sparrow (*To Have and To Hold*); Father Beret (*Alice of Old Vincennes*); John Paul (*Richard Carvel*); Obadiah Strout (*Quincy Adams Sawyer*).

SECTION 64

The Situation

Things that happen must happen at some time and at some place. The place and the time are the situation. Although not much space can be given the situation in a well-proportioned short narrative, what situation there is should be a distinct help to the working out of the plot. If the situation can be made to heighten the dramatic effect of the action, as in Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*,

the story as a whole will be just so much the more effective. What most readers want in a narrative is to know where they are—they want to be put down somewhere. This desire it is the province of the situation to satisfy.¹

Exercise 72

1. CLASS EXERCISE: Study the situations in the narrative selections in this book. Note how little attention is paid to situation in the selection in Exercise 65, a first chapter at that. The situations in *Kaa's Hunting* (Exercise 66) and *The Slide* (Exercise 42), though both selections are incomplete, show master touches. Examine the selections at the beginning of Chapter VII.

2. CLASS EXERCISE: Study the situations in such masterpieces as *Rip Van Winkle*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Great Stone Face*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, etc.

3. Explain the situation of some great battle.

4. How would the situation for a ghost story probably differ from the situation for a story of camp life? How, from the situation for a Christmas story?

5. Bring to the class some good short story in which the situation is given in a paragraph or two at the beginning.

SECTION 65

Movement in Stories

The plot, as was stated in Section 62, is the most important part of a narrative. Without a plot there can be no story. But there are plots and plots. Some plots lag along so slowly, or back and fill so much, that the

¹ It is worth while to note that description enters largely into all situations, and a good deal also into the author's comments on his characters. Too much description, it should be remembered, delays the action of a narrative, and diverts the reader's attention from the plot. The fact that many readers "skip" the long descriptions found in some novels, should be a warning against the over-use of description in narration.

reader finally casts aside his book in disgust. Other plots sweep forward to a carefully prepared climax, and give the reader the sense of satisfaction that always comes from the perusal of a well-constructed story. This difference is largely a difference of what the books call "movement."

The movement in a well-constructed story glides steadily forward to the end, now swiftly and now slowly, according to the depth of the exciting interest. Thus, in Stevenson's story of the defence of the roundhouse (Exercise 64), there is no stopping of the action, though it moves less swiftly in some places than in others. There is at the start, for instance, the preparation against attack, where the movement is slow, then the first attack, where the movement is swift, next the recovery from the first attack and the preparation for the second, where the movement is slow again, and finally the second attack, where the movement is swift once more.¹ But swift or slow, the movement does not back and fill, and it never lags.

A closer inspection of Stevenson's story shows that Stevenson deliberately made the movement slower in the two intervals of quiet in order that he might by contrast throw into bolder relief the two most exciting incidents in his plot. The movement, then, is slow or swift by design. This suggests two questions: Where in a story should the movement be slow and where should it be swift? And how can the movement be made either slow or swift?

The answers to these questions are readily given. Where an important incident is to be prepared for, where suspense is to be kept up, as, for instance, in the intervals of quiet before the two attacks in Stevenson's story, the

¹ Determine just where each of these four stages begins and ends.

movement should be slow ; where the excitement is intense, where the reader is eager for the outcome of the action, as in the two attacks, the movement should be swift.¹ Many details, especially descriptive details, accumulated one upon another, as in the first two paragraphs in Stevenson's story, will make the movement in a story slow, and the suppression of all minor details, with emphasis laid on the essential features of the action, as in the paragraphs narrating the two attacks, will make the movement swift. Stirring dialogue, also, since scarcely anything else will so arouse the reader's interest, will likewise accelerate the movement in a story.

Exercise 73

1. CLASS EXERCISE: Study the movement in the narrative selections in this book. Study the movement in two or three familiar short stories in which the action is fairly rapid. Study the movement in the most exciting chapter in one of the novels named in Exercises 67 (2), 69 (2), and 71 (2).

2. Bring to the class some story in which an exciting incident is preceded by a slow movement, and be prepared to explain how the movement is made slow or swift.

3. In some recent novel find the chapter which has the swiftest movement. If the movement is not equally swift throughout, make a list of the details where the movement is slow, and another where the movement is swiftest. Note the difference between your two lists.

4. Study the movement in one of the poems named in Exercises 22 (9) and 69 (7). Report the results of your study to the class.

5. Study the movement in *Macbeth*, acts ii and v.

6. Write an account of a local incident. Write an account of an historical incident. Before you write, consider the matter of movement.

¹ The movement should be rapid of course where unimportant happenings are narrated. These should be briefly summarized in such general language as will not divert the reader's attention to matters that are bound to be more or less dry and uninteresting.

7. Write a story based on your own experience. You may find it well to adopt the following plan: First, think your story out from beginning to end, and be prepared to tell it orally to the class. Then prepare a careful outline of your story, setting down each important detail in the order in which it is to appear in your finished story, and finally determine where the movement should be slow and where it should be swift. Then write out the story rapidly, and revise it with reference to movement.

Write several such stories. You may vary the work by constructing a story with slow movement throughout, and by rewriting the story, first with swift movement throughout, and then with the movement appropriate to the varying stages of excitement.

SECTION 66

Beginning and Ending a Story

There are two ways to begin a story effectively. The first way is to set forth at the start whatever information is needed to clear the ground for the action that is to follow. This is done by explaining where and when the events in the story occurred, and by describing more or less fully the looks and the ways of the principal characters. This is the method most frequently employed by short story writers, probably because the method enables them to create an atmosphere for the story that they are about to tell.¹ The story proper can then go forward to the end without interruption. Care must be taken, however, not to introduce over much description, which, unless it is skilfully handled, is likely to dissipate the reader's interest before he really gets to the action of the story. The second way to begin a story, and the surer way to

¹ Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* is probably the best example of a short story made effective by the use of "atmosphere." The best stories by Irving and Hawthorne, however, are worth studying in this connection.

catch the reader's interest, is to plunge at once into the action. This is done by making the characters act and talk at the outset, and by bringing in later whatever explanatory matter is needed to make the story intelligible. The difficulty here is to get the explanatory matter in without breaking off the thread of the narrative. The method to be used will in any case depend upon the effect to be produced by the story as a whole, if not upon actual details of character, situation, and plot.

The one way to end a story is to work steadily up to the point of highest interest, and then stop. What is of most importance will then occupy the most prominent position in the story, and, because it occupies this position, will remain longest in the reader's memory. To seize upon this most natural and effective stopping-place, the end of the story must be clearly seen from the beginning, and very carefully prepared for. Failure here may turn even a racy, pointed narrative into stupid nonsense.

Exercise 74

1. CLASS EXERCISES: Review, with special reference to beginnings and endings, several of the plays, poems, and short stories read by the class for the work in literature. Examine the beginnings and endings of the narrative selections in this book.

2. Bring to the class a short story that begins with a brief descriptive introduction. Explain to the class the function of the introduction.

3. Find a chapter, in some novel, that begins with action or dialogue.

4. From some work of fiction select a passage that interests you, like any of the selections printed at the beginning of the present chapter, and write a brief introduction for it.

5. Write a brief introduction for the selection in Exercise 64.

6. Write a brief introduction for a scene in one of Shakspeare's plays. You may select the scene from any act except the first.

7. Bring to the class a narrative poem that begins with action.

8. Find several anecdotes¹ and study their endings. Do they stop when the point of the story is reached? How is this point led up to? Be prepared to tell one of the anecdotes to the class.

9. Write an original anecdote. Lead up to the point of the story and then stop. If, when you reach the point of your story, you still have something to tell, you will have to reconstruct your story, as this is a sure sign of a poorly constructed narrative.

10. Write an original fable to illustrate some moral, but be careful not to state the moral in your fable. Read your fable to the class, and ask the members of the class to guess the moral.

11. Read the first half of some short story that you have never read, and, without looking at the latter half, finish the story. When you have done, compare your ending with the original ending. This exercise will train your imagination and teach you many valuable lessons in story-telling.

SECTION 67

The Point of View

The point of view is as essential to narration as it is to description, and it is pretty much the same in both kinds of writing. In description, as you will learn later on, the point of view is the position from which you look at the things you describe; in narration, the point of view is the position from which you look at the things you narrate. In narration, however, the point of view is perhaps more often a mental attitude than it is in description—that is, in narration more frequently than in description you put yourself in imaginary positions, which you cannot in person take, from which you look at the things you narrate. Thus, whenever you write a fiction, whatever

¹ An anecdote (from a Greek word meaning *unpublished* or *not given out*) is a brief account of an interesting incident in some person's life. It is always told as a fact.

your point of view, the latter is a mental, and not a physical, attitude which you take toward the story you tell.

Now, the point of view in a story may be your own — that is, you may tell the story as if you yourself had witnessed all you narrate, as perhaps you have — or, the point of view may be that of one of the characters in the story — that is, you may put yourself in the place of one of the characters, and tell the story as if that character had witnessed what you narrate. The first point of view is illustrated by the narrative selections in Exercises 17, 20, 42, 65, and 66;¹ the second is illustrated by Stevenson's story of the defence of the roundhouse, Exercise 64.

The point of view which Stevenson adopts has some advantages for inexperienced writers, and even, under certain circumstances, for experienced writers. By putting yourself in the place of one of your characters, for instance, that character becomes more real to you, and, since you then take part in the action yourself, you are enabled to realize more clearly the minutiae of the various scenes and situations in your plot. You become an actor on a new stage, and for you the action assumes that quality of "seeming reality" which is so essential for the creation of illusion by means of fiction.

But, whatever point of view you adopt, you should be careful not to shift it without good reason and with-

¹ Most narratives adopt this point of view. In fiction, this point of view has its advantages, since it leaves the writer free to handle his characters as he pleases, and permits the reader to imagine himself to be any of the characters he chooses — something that all readers like to do, especially if the story is absorbingly interesting. If, on the contrary, the events narrated are true, as in Franklin's account of his first day in Philadelphia, this point of view is of course the natural one, and it then has all the advantages claimed below for the other point of view.

out due warning to the reader. Stevenson, though he makes David tell the story of the defence of the roundhouse, does not include in his narrative a single detail that might not have come under the observation of David. No scene is introduced at which David might not have been present, no talk which he might not have heard, and no thought which he might not have expressed or heard expressed. The point of view is rigidly maintained to the end of the story.

Exercise 75

1. Determine the point of view in several of your favorite stories.
2. Tell the story of the defence of the roundhouse (Exercise 64) as if you were Alan.
3. Tell the story of the defence of the roundhouse from your own point of view; that is, tell the story in the third person.
4. Tell the story of the attack on the roundhouse as the captain of the crew would tell it.
5. Tell Franklin's story (Exercise 17) from your own point of view.
6. Tell the story of Kaa's hunting (Exercise 66) as Mowgli would tell it.
7. Read Longfellow's *King Robert of Sicily*, and write the story as King Robert might have written it. You may vary this exercise by choosing any narrative poem that you like. Some narrative poems, and most stories, may be rewritten from several points of view. The point of view which the author chooses, however, is likely to be the best.

NOTE. — Use the first person in 2, 4, 6, and 7.

SECTION 68

Conversation in Stories

The conversation in a story is generally the most agreeable part of it; but the conversation is agreeable only when it pushes on the action and adds reality and variety and animation to the story. A servile imitation of actual

conversation, it must be remembered, is scarcely ever agreeable. Such conversation, when it appears in print, seldom produces the illusion of truth. On the contrary, such conversation is more than likely to seem either commonplace or unnatural. There are several reasons for this. Most actual conversation is characterized by inaccurate and incomplete expressions, and by want of thought — of suggestiveness. Put into print, the inaccurate expressions, perhaps not noticed in actual conversation, at once attract the reader's attention, and even because they attract the reader's attention, assume undue importance; the incomplete expressions, given meaning in actual conversation by tones and looks and gestures, at once lose their significance; and the want of thought — of suggestiveness, disguised in actual conversation by the personal magnetism of the speaker, soon brings fatigue. In a story, moreover, only a little talk is needed to produce the illusion of a lengthy conversation. A novel frequently covers a period of several years, sometimes it covers a lifetime or more, and yet all the conversation of all its characters would take less time to utter than your own talk for a week. "Seeming reality," and not truth, is the test of agreeable conversation in stories.

Conversation in stories, to be agreeable and effective, must be in keeping with the characters who speak it. In life — and at least this much help we can get from actual conversation — we partly judge¹ a man by what he says and by how he says it; in other words, we partly judge a man by the ideas he expresses, by the language and the

¹ "We partly judge," because we chiefly judge a man by what he does. Action, of course, is the most important thing in a story, but a good deal of action can accompany, or be reported in, the conversation.

tone of voice in which he expresses them, and by the looks, the gestures, and the more decided actions with which he enforces them. Now, by examining any bit of good dialogue, you can easily ascertain how the details just enumerated are used as means to reveal character, but a knowledge of these details, and of their use, will not teach you how to write conversation that is in keeping with the characters who speak it. To write such conversation, you must know your characters so well that they will speak, not what you wish them to say, but what they themselves wish to say. In a word, your characters must be so real to you that they will talk of their own accord.

Exercise 76

1. A thing to avoid, in the writing of conversation in stories, is the monotonous use of "said he," "said she," etc., to indicate who is speaking. Go through fifteen or twenty pages of some novel, and make a list of the various expressions used to indicate the speaker. Note particularly the use and the precise meaning of such terms as: asked, inquired, demanded, remarked, observed, replied, returned, murmured, growled, sneered, grinned, fawned, cried, explained, exclaimed, etc., etc. Note also how the talk itself is sometimes made to indicate the speaker.

2. Make another list, similar to the above, of the short comments interspersed in the conversation. Thus:—

. . . said my aunt to Peggotty, who quailed before her awful presence . . . said Peggotty, with a curtsy. . . . Here my aunt looked hard at Mrs. Crupp, and observed . . . said my aunt, looking earnestly at me . . . said my aunt, laying her hand calmly on my shoulder.—*David Copperfield.*

3. Study the more important items of action interspersed in the conversation; for example:—

"And you, Master—I should say, Mister Copperfield," pursued Uriah. "I hope I see you well! I am rejoiced to see you, Mister Copperfield, even under the present circumstances." *I believed that; for he seemed to relish them very much.* "Present circumstances is not

what your friends would wish for you, Mister Copperfield, but it isn't money makes the man: it's—I am really unequal with my 'umble powers to express what it is," said Uriah, with a fawning jerk, "but it isn't money!"

Here he shook hands with me: not in the common way, but standing at a good distance from me, and lifting my hand up and down, like a pump-handle, that he was afraid of.

"And how do you think we are looking, Master Copperfield,—I should say, Mister?" fawned Uriah. "Don't you find Mr. Wickfield blooming, Sir? Years don't tell much in our firm, Master Copperfield, except in raising up the 'umble, namely, mother and self—and in developing," he added, as an afterthought, "the beautiful, namely, Miss Agnes."

He jerked himself about, after this compliment, in such an intolerable manner, that my aunt, who had sat looking straight at him, lost all patience.

"Deuce take the man!" said my aunt, sternly, "what's he about? Don't be galvanic, Sir!"

"I ask your pardon, Miss Trotwood," returned Uriah; "I'm aware you're nervous."

"Go along with you, Sir!" said my aunt, anything but appeased. "Don't presume to say so! I am nothing of the sort. If you're an eel, Sir, conduct yourself like one. If you're a man, control your limbs, Sir! Good God!" said my aunt, with great indignation, "I am not going to be serpentine and corkscrewed out of my senses."

Mr. Heep was rather abashed, as most people might have been, by this explosion; which derived great additional force from the indignant manner in which my aunt afterwards moved in her chair, and shook her head as if she were making snaps or bounces at him. — David Copperfield, chap. xxxv.

4. In the narrative selections in this book, or in some novel, find two speeches which, by means of the ideas expressed, show a contrast of character. Find two speeches which, by means of the language used, show a contrast of character.

5. Study the chapter in Exercise 65, and then write a short narrative in which you try to make clear two or three characters, either real or fictitious, by means of dialogue.

6. Write a short narrative in which you make two characters talk about some action which has taken place at a distance and which only one of them has witnessed.

Exercise 77

EXERCISES IN NARRATION

1. Read again the narrative selection in Exercise 64, in which two characters are revealed mainly by what they do, and then try to make clear two characters of your own creation by setting them to doing something. Take care in all your dialogue work to make clear who is speaking, and to vary the comments that you throw in between the speeches. Into these comments put as much life as you can.

NOTE. — In this manner, almost any phase of story-writing may be taken, — such as retarded movement, rapid movement, characters in animated conversation, in struggle, in repose, characters other than persons (those found in fairy tales and the like), situations of every sort, and so on without limit, — an example of the thing to be done found in some good piece of fiction, and then something of the same sort done with material all your own. You should of course avoid servile imitation, the object being to learn and to practise the methods used by the story-writer, and not to copy what he has written.

2. Write a narrative in which you aim at suspense, keeping back the complete outcome until you reach the very end.

3. Write an account of your childhood, after the manner of Franklin's story in Exercise 17. Select some incident that you think might interest the class, and bring out prominently the most entertaining features of the incident.

4. Recall some humorous incident which you have witnessed, and tell it in as vivid a way as you can. Read something by Mark Twain, and imitate his way of telling a humorous story.

5. You have somewhere read a story in which a game of some sort — football, baseball, tennis, golf, croquet, a field day contest — formed the framework of the plot. Try to write a similar story.

6. Write a story dealing with a race, — a foot race, a boat race, a bicycle race, a race on skates, or the like.

7. Write a story dealing with a fight or a duel.

8. Write a story dealing with an intellectual contest of some kind, — a spelling match, a debate, a contest in declamation or oratory, a trial at court, etc.

9. Write a humorous story in the negro or the Irish dialect. "Uncle Remus" and "Mr. Dooley" will furnish models. Do not

overdo the matter of dialect, — a suggestion of peculiarities of speech is often more effective in story-telling than an accurate reproduction of dialect forms.

10. Write a brief biography, in two or three hundred words, of some noted man whom you admire and whose life you have read. Write an account of some important incident in the man's life.

11. Try to write an impartial account of some event in which you have taken a prominent part.

12. Write a tale embodying a local legend or an Indian tradition.

13. Read Emerson's *The Mountain and the Squirrel*, and write a similar story about a bird and a tree.

14. Select one of the following subjects, and make it the basis of a story of adventure: (1) a capsized canoe; (2) a dangerous leap; (3) trapping a fox; (4) a race for life on snow-shoes; (5) on a run-away locomotive; (6) caught in a burning passenger train; (7) hunting for deer; (8) an unwelcome visitor; (9) a cloudburst in the mountains; (10) a forest fire; (11) a ride on a log raft; (12) a storm and a wreck at the coastguard station; (13) on a snow-bound train; (14) with an axe in the woods; (15) an adventure with a bee thief; (16) an open switch; (17) a washout; (18) an escape from the icebergs.

15. Select some incident from school life, and write a story in which you attempt to give a faithful picture of American school life. Here are some subjects: (1) a lesson in courtesy; (2) the new boy and the bully; (3) trouble about "choosing up"; (4) the new master and an old trick; (5) the last inning; (6) Tom's defeat; (7) the troublesome school director; (8) the athletic master and the boys of —.

16. Invent a story to illustrate one of the following characters: —
A girl with a selfish temperament overcome by a disaster.

An awkward yet a shrewd and determined boy thrown among worldly-wise companions.

A boy who wishes to get on in the world thrown among spend-thrifts.

A boy who wins promotion by doing more than he is paid for.

17. Write a story in which you suggest, but do not tell, the outcome. For the use of suggestion in stories, see Kipling's *Cupid's Arrows*, in *Plain Tales from the Hills*, the ending of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, and Browning's *My Last Duchess*.

18. Write a story for children, modelling your story after the stories for children in *St. Nicholas*, *Harper's Round Table*, and *The Youth's Companion*. Test the worth of your story by reading it to some child you know.

19. Tell orally a short, true story from the life of General Grant. Tell another from the life of Abraham Lincoln. Tell a third from the life of some prominent man now living.

20. Tell orally to the class the plot of the last novel you have read.

21. Tell orally to the class the plot of your favorite narrative poem.

22. Tell orally to the class some good anecdote you have heard or read. Have clearly in mind the point of your story, and tell the story as vividly as you know how.

23. Find, in a recent number of some magazine, a good short story. Study the means by which the author arouses and holds your attention, and be prepared to explain to the class the results of your study. Prepare an outline of the story, and, with the help of your outline, tell the story to the class.

24. Study, as in 23 above, the most exciting chapter in some novel named in this book.

25. A new boy comes to school, and the school "bully" picks a quarrel with him. The new boy, however, wins after a hard-fought battle.

Tell the story as the new boy told it at home.

Tell the story as the "bully" told it to an absent crony.

Tell the story as one of the other boys told it.

Tell the story as it was told to the principal.

26. It is the day before Christmas in the home of a poor widow. Her home is mortgaged, and the holder of the mortgage threatens to foreclose if the mortgage is not paid when due — the day after Christmas. Ten years before, the widow's only son went West to seek his fortune. He promised to send for his mother as soon as he should earn enough money to do so, but he was never heard from after.

Bring the story to a happy ending. Tell the story in the third person.

27. The most popular girl in — Seminary is forced to leave school because her father has failed in business. Her school friends find a way for her to return.

Write the story as one of the girls wrote it in a letter to her mother.

Write the story as the heroine told it to her father.

28. A boy from the country goes to the city to find work. He is robbed of what little money he has, and for three weeks he suffers severely from a lack of food and shelter. He is about to go home, when he one day saves a little girl from being run over by a street car. This leads to his employment in the store of the little girl's father, who is a rich merchant.

Write the story of the accident as the boy might tell it.

Write the story of the accident as the little girl might tell it to her father.

Write the newspaper account of the rescue.

Write the story of the boy's adventures from the time he left home until he secured employment in the rich merchant's store.

Write a sequel to the above, dealing with the boy's promotion for faithful work, his education at his employer's expense, his management of the store in which he was once a clerk, and—but you know the rest.

29. There has been trouble in the district school at —, a backwoods settlement in Maine. Three masters have been forced to give up the school after more or less serious difficulties with the big boys.

Your story deals with the new master.

30. Two boys are working for the same employer. A telegram is left after business hours for the employer, who has gone home. It is raining hard, it is late, and it is a long way to the employer's home; but one of the boys, against the advice of the other, determines to take the telegram to his employer. He does so, and the telegram turns out to be very important.

Work the plot out, and tell the story in the third person.

31. L— is a young attorney living at Bakersfield, California, in the Kern River oil district. He invests \$1000 for a client and \$1000 for himself in two oil well boring experiments, but takes the receipt for each investment in his own name. When, a month later, he learns that oil is struck in one well, and that the other well is dry, he at once informs his client that the latter's money was invested in the dry well.

Take the plot at this stage, and work out a surprise for the attorney, which shall also be a punishment for his wrong-doing.

32. Write out a story that has been told you — by your father or grandfather, for instance. If it has to do with some noted man, some great event, or some interesting custom of the past, it will be all the more worth telling.

33. Write an anecdote, in a single paragraph, which will illustrate some one of the following truths: (1) It is always best to speak and act the truth, (2) to be prompt, (3) to be polite, (4) to be industrious, (5) to be obliging to strangers. Or select any similar truth that you think of, but do not turn your anecdote into a sermon. Write from your own experience if you can.

34. Here are some simple subjects for short narratives. Some of the subjects may require some description: —

1. The last skate of the winter.
2. A camping out adventure.
3. The most interesting incident in my life.
4. How the acorn becomes an oak.
5. A night search.
6. My first "piece."
7. My only experience with ghosts.
8. The farmer's wife in the elevator.
9. An exciting arrest.
10. Trouble in the poultry-yard.
11. A street-car incident.
12. How our cat was lost.
13. The plot of the last play I witnessed.
14. Baby's first visit to the photographer.
15. A night in the woods.
16. An adventure with a raft.
17. My experience with a strike.
18. A day in a house-boat.
19. My experience as a tramp.¹

¹ Nearly all of the above subjects call for stories and incidents that may have come under your own observation. At any rate, select one that has come under your own observation, and write and rewrite your story until you have worked it into the best form you are capable of. The little anecdote told by Franklin (Section 59) may serve as your model.

The following subjects require imaginative treatment:

1. A ride in a life-boat.
2. What the school clock saw one night.
3. An original fable.
4. An original fairy tale.
5. A leaf from the diary of a house fly.
6. An imaginary conversation with Dr. Johnson.
7. An interview with the President.
8. The autobiography of a blue jay.
9. How I discovered Captain Kidd's treasure.
10. Lost off Labrador.
11. The wanderings of a valentine.
12. What Flush, my dog, told me about cats.
13. On a runaway freight car.
14. Adrift on a raft.

CHAPTER VII

DESCRIPTION

Exercise 78

INDOORS ON A RAINY DAY¹

BY HAMLIN GARLAND

THE rain was still falling, sweeping down from the half-seen hills, wreathing the wooded peaks with a gray garment of mist, and filling the valley with a whitish cloud.

It fell around the house drearily. It ran down into the tubs placed to catch it, dripped from the mossy pump, and drummed on the upturned milk-pails, and upon the brown and yellow beehives under the maple trees. The chickens seemed depressed, but the irrepressible blue jay screamed amid it all, with the same insolent spirit, his plumage untarnished by the wet. The barn-yard showed a horrible mixture of mud and mire, through which Howard caught glimpses of the men, slumping to and fro without more additional protection than a ragged coat and a shapeless felt hat.

In the sitting room where his mother sat sewing there was not an ornament, save the etching he had brought. The clock stood on a small shelf, its dial so much defaced that one could not tell the time of day; and when it struck, it was with noticeably disproportionate deliberation, as if it wished to correct any mistake into which the family might have fallen by reason of its illegible dial.

The paper on the walls showed the first concession of the Puritans to the Spirit of Beauty, and was made up of a heterogeneous mixture of flowers of unheard-of shapes and colors, arranged in four different ways along the wall. There were no books, no music, and only a few newspapers in sight — a bare, blank, cold, drab-colored shelter from

¹From *Main Travelled Roads*. The Arena Publishing Company, Boston.

the rain, not a home. Nothing cosey, nothing heart-warming; a grim and horrible shed.

HELPS TO STUDY: What is your feeling when forced to remain indoors on a rainy day? What adds to your discomfort? Is a similar impression produced by the present description? How is it produced? Point out the details that add to the general dreariness of the scene, indoors as well as outdoors. Do such words as "drearily," "depressed," "bare," "blank," and the like, have any effect in producing a feeling of discomforting dreariness? Find other words of the same sort. What part do adjectives play in the description? Make a list of them, with the nouns they modify. Note especially the effect of such phrases as "half-seen hills," "wooded peaks," "gray garment," and the like. Some of these phrases of themselves make very vivid mental pictures. Which, should you say, in the whole selection makes the most vivid picture? Do you notice a difference between these phrases that make pictures? Between "mossy pump" and "irrepressible blue jay," for example? What of the nouns? Are they concrete or abstract? If a great many abstract nouns had been used, how would they have affected the description? What part do the verbs play in the description? Make a list of them, and note the effect of such verbs as "dripped," "drummed," "screamed," etc. Which of the three, adjective, noun, or verb, has the greatest effect in description? Which has the least effect? Continue this line of word study in the selections which follow, and make use of what you learn by it in the descriptions which you yourself write.

Exercise 79

A WET SUNDAY IN A COUNTRY INN

BY WASHINGTON IRVING¹

It was a rainy Sunday in the gloomy month of November. I had been detained, in the course of a journey, by a slight indisposition, from which I was recovering; but was still feverish, and obliged to keep within doors all day, in an inn of the small town of Derby. A wet Sunday in a country inn!—whoever has had the luck to experience one can alone judge of my situation. The rain pattered against

¹ From *The Stout Gentleman*.

the casements; the bells tolled for church with a melancholy sound. I went to the windows in quest of something to amuse the eye; but it seemed as if I had been placed completely out of reach of all amusement. The windows of my bedroom looked out among tiled roofs and stacks of chimneys, while those of my sitting room commanded a full view of the stable-yard. I know of nothing more calculated to make a man sick of this world than a stable-yard on a rainy day. The place was littered with wet straw that had been kicked about by travellers and stable-boys. In one corner was a stagnant pool of water, surrounding an island of muck; there were several half-drowned fowls crowded together under a cart, among which was a miserable, crest-fallen cock, drenched out of all life and spirit, his drooping tail matted, as it were, into a single feather, along which the water trickled from his back; near the cart was a half-dozing cow, chewing the cud, and standing patiently to be rained on, with wreaths of vapor rising from her reeking hide; a wall-eyed horse, tired of the loneliness of the stable, was poking his spectral head out of a window, with the rain dropping on it from the eaves; an unhappy cur, chained to a dog-house hard by, uttered something, every now and then, between a bark and a yelp; a drab of a kitchen-wench tramped backward and forward through the yard in pattens, looking as sulky as the weather itself; everything, in short, was comfortless and forlorn, excepting a crew of hardened ducks, assembled like boon companions round a puddle, and making a riotous noise over their liquor.

HELPS TO STUDY: This selection may be studied in much the same way as the preceding selection. Dealing as it does with almost the same subject, it will be interesting to compare the two rather closely—in point of view, impression produced, diction, etc. The key to the impression produced by the present paragraph is found well toward the close of the last sentence, where it is said that everything was “comfortless and forlorn.” What details, what words help to make this impression? Is there anything in Garland’s description like Irving’s description of the “hardened ducks”? What is added to this latter bit of description which is not found in ordinary description?

Exercise 80

IN THE HOUSE OF USHER¹

BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, of the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

HELPS TO STUDY: Compare this description of a room with that in *Indoors on a Rainy Day*; also with other descriptions of rooms, which may be found in almost any novel. In what order are the objects in the room described? Do you find the same order in other descriptions of the sort? What general impression is produced? How does this affect the choice of objects to be described, so far as you can tell? Find some other description of a room which produces a different impression. Is there anything in the present paragraph that suggests what sort of people the Ushers are? Read the story, and learn whether your guess is right.

Exercise 81

OUR APPROACH TO NEVIS²

BY LAFCADIO HEARN

Southward, above and beyond the deep green chain, tower other volcanic forms,—very far away, and so pale-gray as to seem like clouds. Those are the heights of Nevis,—another creation of the subterranean fires.

¹ From the *Fall of the House of Usher*.

² From *A Midsummer Trip to the Tropics*, 30–31.

It draws nearer, floats steadily into definition : a great mountain flanked by two small ones; three summits; the loftiest, with clouds packed high upon it, still seems to smoke; the second highest displays the most symmetrical crater-form I have yet seen. All are still grayish-blue or gray. Gradually through the blues break long high gleams of green.

As we steam closer, the island becomes all verdant from flood to sky; the great dead crater shows its immense wreath of perennial green. On the lower slopes little settlements are sprinkled in white, red, and brown; houses, windmills, sugar-factories, high chimneys are distinguishable;—cane plantations unfold gold-green surfaces.

We pass away. The island does not seem to sink behind us, but to become a ghost. All its outlines grow shadowy. For a little while it continues green; but it is a hazy, spectral green, as of colored vapor. The sea to-day looks almost black: the southwest wind has filled the day with luminous mist; and the phantom of Nevis melts in the vast glow, dissolves utterly.¹

Exercise 82

I. THRESHING.² II. A DAKOTA PRAIRIE*

BY HAMLIN GARLAND

I

Boo-oo-oo-oom, boo-woo-woo-oom-oom-ow-owm, yarr-yarr! The whirling cylinder boomed, roared, and snarled as it rose in speed. At last, when its tone became a rattling yell, David nodded to the pitchers, rasped his hands together, the sheaves began to fall from the stack, the band-cutter, knife in hand, slashed the bands in twain, and the feeder, with easy majestic motion, gathered them under his arm, rolled them out into an even belt of entering wheat, on which the cylinder tore with its frightful, ferocious snarl.

Will was very happy in his quiet way. He enjoyed the smooth roll of his great muscles, the sense of power he felt in his hands as he lifted, turned, and swung the heavy sheaves two by two down upon

¹ For help in studying this selection, and the selections following, see the *Helps to Study* in Exercises 78-80.

² From *Main Travelled Roads*.

* *Ibid.*

the table, where the band-cutter madly slashed away. His frame, sturdy rather than tall, was nevertheless lithe, and he made a fine figure to look at, so Agnes thought, as she came out a moment and bowed and smiled to both the young men.

This scene, one of the jolliest and most sociable of the Western farm, had a charm quite aside from human companionship. The beautiful yellow straw entering the cylinder; the clear yellow-brown wheat pulsing out at the side; the broken straw, chaff, and dust puffing out on the great stacker; the cheery whistling and calling of the driver; the keen, crisp air, and the bright sun somehow weirdly suggestive of the passage of time.

II

Leaving Rob to sputter over his cooking, Seagraves took his slow way off down toward the oxen grazing in a little hollow. The scene was characteristically, wonderfully beautiful. It was about five o'clock in a day in late June, and the level plain was green and yellow, and infinite in reach as a sea; the lowering sun was casting over its distant swells a faint impalpable mist, through which the breaking teams on the neighboring claims ploughed noiselessly, as figures in a dream. The whistle of gophers, the faint, wailing, fluttering cry of the falling plover, the whirl of the swift-winged prairie-pigeon, or the quack of a lonely duck, came through the shimmering air. The lark's infrequent whistle, piercingly sweet, broke from the longer grass in the swales near by. No other climate, sky, plain, could produce the same unnamable weird charm. No tree to wave, no grass to rustle; scarcely a sound of domestic life; only the faint melancholy sighing of the wind in the short grass, and the voices of the wild things of the prairie.

Seagraves, an impressionable young man (junior editor of the *Boomtown Spike*), threw himself down on the sod, pulled his hat-rim down over his eyes, and looked away over the plain. It was the second year of Boomtown's existence, and Seagraves had not yet grown restless under its monotony. Around him the gophers played saucily. Teams were moving here and there across the sod, with a peculiar noiseless, effortless motion that made them seem as calm, lazy, and unsubstantial as the mist through which they made their way; even

the sound of passing wagons was a sort of low, well-fed, self-satisfied chuckle.

Seagraves, "holding down a claim" near Rob, had come to see his neighboring "bach" because feeling the need of company; but, now that he was near enough to hear him prancing about getting supper, he was content to lie alone on a slope of the green sod.

The silence of the prairie at night was well-nigh terrible. Many a night, as Seagraves lay in his bunk against the side of his cabin, he would strain his ear to hear the slightest sound, and be listening thus sometimes for minutes before the squeak of a mouse or the step of a passing fox came as a relief to the aching sense. In the daytime, however, and especially on a morning, the prairie was another thing. The pigeons, the larks, the cranes, the multitudinous voices of the ground-birds and snipes and insects, made the air pulsate with sound — a chorus that died away into an infinite murmur of music.

"Hello, Seagraves!" yelled Rob from the door. "The biscuit are 'most done."

Seagraves did not speak, only nodded his head, and slowly rose. The faint clouds in the west were getting a superb flame-color above and a misty purple below, and the sun had shot them with lances of yellow light. As the air grew denser with moisture, the sounds of neighboring life began to reach the ear. Children screamed and laughed, and afar off a woman was singing a lullaby. The rattle of wagons and voices of men speaking to their teams multiplied. Ducks in a neighboring lowland were quacking. The whole scene took hold upon Seagraves with irresistible power.¹

¹ For other specimens of description, not all of which are examples of pure description, see *The Snow-Storm* (Exercise 14), *Ichabod on Horseback* (Section 13), *The Wreck* (Exercise 29; study the epithets), *The Bay of Monterey* (Section 18; illustrates plan and comparison in description), *Smokeless Powder in Battle* (Exercise 32), *At the Trial of Warren Hastings* (Exercise 46), *The Knight of the Red Crosse* (Exercise 50); see further Exercise 23 (last selection; narration and description blended), Section 25 ("The solitary mountain-side," etc.; note the emphasis laid on the single detail, laughter), Section 46 ("Venerable Men!" etc.), and the situations in the narrative selections in this book.

SECTION 69

The Nature of Description

The nature of description, the least independent of the four kinds of writing,¹ ought now to be fairly well understood. From what was said about description in Section 59 and at the beginning of Part III, and from your study of the selections at the beginning of this chapter, you have learned that description, like narration, deals mainly with the outer world of persons and things, and that description, unlike narration, has to do mainly with the appearance of persons and things, — the purpose of all description being to tell how persons and things look. You have learned also that the details in the most effective description are brought in in the order in which they would most likely be seen. This last fact, as we shall soon see, is of the utmost importance in the work of description, and will be fully explained in the next section.

But there are really two sorts of description. By one sort of description you convey information to the reader about some person or thing, and by the other sort you try to give your impression of the appearance of some person or thing in such a way as to produce in the mind of the reader an image more or less like your own. The two sorts of description are easily illustrated. An example of the first sort is the following description, given out by detectives, of an escaped bank defaulter : —

¹ Pieces of pure description are hard to find. Most description is accessory to narration or explanation, and is therefore commonly brief and fragmentary.

AN ESCAPED BANK DEFAULTER

Fifty years old; five feet eleven inches in height; weighs 270 pounds.

Face large, rotund, and jovial.

Eyes blue, hair and mustache iron-gray.

A good dresser; wears large diamond stud in shirt front; no rings.

Favorite amusements roulette, stock speculation, horse racing.

Home life irreproachable; kind and indulgent husband and father.

A devout church member.

With this, contrast a somewhat exaggerated example of the second sort — Dickens' description of the "shabby-genteel" Mr. Tigg (Exercise 87). For some reason or other we have a pretty clear image in our minds of Mr. Tigg — not much like Dickens' ideal of him very likely, but none the less an image we shall not soon lose, while, on the other hand, no amount of effort on our part will raise any but the vaguest sort of a notion as to the appearance of the bank defaulter. The secret of Dickens' success, and the reason why one sort of description produces thus easily a fairly clear mental image, and the other almost none at all, will appear in a later section. The point now to be emphasized is the difference in kind and in purpose between the two sorts of description. In description of the first sort, to put the matter in another way, you try to instruct the reader by appealing to his understanding; in description of the second sort you try to interest the reader by appealing to his emotions. What the difference of effect is you have just seen. Now, the purpose, and even the method, of the first sort of description are so like the purpose and the method of explanation that it would be scarcely worth while, in a book like this, curiously to distinguish between the two. In the work of the school you will find it more profitable,

and vastly more entertaining, to study and practise the sort of description that makes the greater demand upon your imagination, and in this chapter, therefore, the word "description" will be confined almost entirely to this kind of writing.

SECTION 70

Perception by Sight¹

Perception by sight is not the instantaneous process it seems to be. As I look out the window of the room in which I am writing these words, I have revealed to me a little world of objects. A dense fog has rolled in from the ocean, and shuts out from my view the mountains which I know are in the distance. But I can still see the V-shaped sward beneath my window, dotted here and there with shrubs and trees, among which are two date palms, a cedar, a redwood, a bunch of pampas grass, and a clump of bamboo stalks. I can see, at the right of the sward, a group of dark green olive trees, at the left, a few small apricot trees, now pruned to stumps and leafless — it is winter, and, out beyond the sward, row upon row of young prune trees, with five live oaks and one scrubby white oak farther off and all but hidden in the gray cloud of fog. I observe, also, that all these objects have not only color, but shape, size, and distance, and that they stand in various relations of space to each other. Now, I have seen these objects, and many more beside, in their various relations to each other, and with their attributes of color, shape, size, and distance, in a mere instant of

¹ Description is not confined to sensations of sight, although it depends chiefly upon these. As we shall see later, sensations of hearing, touch, taste, and smell may be at least suggested by description.

time—in less time perhaps than it takes to write a single word on this page. My eyes, seemingly almost motionless, have taken in these objects at a glance, and yet I am compelled to believe that they have in reality run over each object and mastered it in all its details. Habit—or, more precisely, the past experience of the muscular and other sensations belonging to the movement of my eyes—has made this process of seeing things a process seemingly instantaneous—like the taking of an instantaneous photograph.¹

Had I approached gradually and from a distance the scene I have witnessed, as Mr. Hearn approached Nevis,² I should doubtless be able to recall more or less distinctly the several stages in my perception of the scene. I should doubtless be able to recall these stages, also, had I had the means of interrupting my sight at given intervals in the instant of time during which my eyes were running over the objects in my field of vision.

This last experiment, although a difficult one, can be made with some success by exposing an object to view for an instant of time and then as quickly shutting it out from sight. “This can be done by means of a small screen, easily handled, or a curtain, or, best of all, a stereopticon, by which the exposure and concealment of the image may be made complete and instantaneous.”³

¹ See G. T. Ladd's *Primer of Psychology*, chap. vii, for an exceedingly clear and simple statement of the psychological and physiological principles involved in perception by sight.

² See Exercise 81.

³ “In these experiments the mechanical difficulties are greater than might be supposed, and the exposures, to be of any value, must be managed with the greatest care. They must be exceedingly short,—the fractional part of a second,—but complete, and the distance of the object from the observers, as well as its illumination, must be so planned that all may get

"Adopting one of these devices, suppose we take first a bunch of leaves of various kinds, and expose them to view for an instant. If the exposure has been sufficiently short, it will be found that the spectators have received little more than an impression of something green. On a second exposure, this will have defined itself into a perception of form sufficiently clear to involve the recognition of the object as leaves. On a third exposure the impressions will have gained further definiteness, both in perceptions of color, form, and even texture, and the spectators will now perceive that the leaves are of different kinds. A fourth and fifth exposure will furnish material for the discrimination between the kinds, and perhaps the identification of some, as oak, maple, beech, or rose leaves.

"The order of perception may be summed up thus:—

1st.	2d.	3d.	4th.
Green thing.	Green leaves.	Green leaves of different kinds: light, dark, lobed, etc.	Green leaves of different kinds: Oak: dark, glossy, lobed. Maple: lighter, star-shaped. Rose: divided into leaflets, etc. ¹

Experiments like this, crude though all such experiments must be, support the statement made at the beginning of this section, that perception by sight is not the

as nearly as possible the same opportunity for perception. Reflected lights, especially, must be guarded against, and it is of course well to avoid using highly glazed photographs, or pictures under glass. When all possible precautions have been taken, considerable practice in manipulation may be necessary before good results are obtained. But good results when they are gained are worth the trouble." — BUCK and WOODBRIDGE.

¹ Buck and Woodbridge, *A Course in Expository Writing*, chap. ii.

instantaneous process it seems to be. Perception by sight, like other mental processes, is a process in time. With most people, moreover, the seeing of an object or a scene probably passes through pretty nearly the same stages on its way to completeness, — there is first the vague, general impression of the object or the scene as a whole, then the successive impressions which grow out of the first impression and which become more definite and more detailed as the parts of the object or the scene are realized, and, finally, the complete impression, which is made up of all the impressions that have preceded it, and which leaves in the brain as perfect an image of the object or the scene as a whole and in all its parts as the organs of sight are capable of forming.

Exercise 83

1. **CLASS EXERCISE:** Make several experiments like that with the bunch of leaves, described in Section 70. Any unfamiliar object will do to experiment with, such as a highly colored piece of cloth with some unusual figure wrought in it, a bunch of flowers in a curiously designed vase, a small painting of almost any kind, or a colored illustration from a magazine mounted on dark cardboard. Conduct each experiment in silence, postponing all discussion until the experiment is finished. Allow sufficient time, after each exposure, for the writing of the impressions made by the exposure.

The object of these experiments is to determine clearly the various stages leading to the complete recognition of the objects exposed. If conducted with care, the experiments ought to show that perception by sight is a process in time, and requires more mental activity and development than most people are conscious of.

2. Approach gradually some distant object, after the manner of Mr. Hearn's approach to Nevis, and record your impressions.

3. Watch some object approaching from a distance, and as it approaches write down your impressions. Make the experiment with (1) a wagon, (2) a man on horseback, (3) a man on a bicycle, (4) an automobile, (5) a street car, (6) a train, (7) a steamboat or a sailboat.

4. Make the experiment with a receding object.

5. Record your impression of some object passing swiftly by you, as a face in the window of a passing train, a person on a rapidly moving bicycle, or a bird flying.

6. Study one of the descriptive selections in this book to ascertain if the details are introduced in the order the author most likely saw them.

SECTION 71

Some Difficulties

Serious difficulties confront us when we try to describe an object we have seen, especially when we try to give our impression of the appearance of an object in such a way as to produce in the mind of the reader a mental image more or less like our own. To begin with, words succeed each other in time, and lag along at a snail's pace when compared with the swift flight of our organs of sight. The result of this disparity in speed is that the first detail in a word description is frequently forgotten by the reader before the last detail, which is to complete the description, is reached. Then, words are used mainly to describe the parts of the object seen, which parts the reader must laboriously put together before he can get a mental picture of the object as a whole. The process, says Coleridge,¹ "seems to be like taking the pieces of a dissected map out of its box. We first look at one part and then at another, then join and dovetail them; and when the successive acts of attention have been completed, there is a retrogressive effort of mind to behold it as a whole." The result of all this is so unsatisfactory that not unfrequently the poorest model or photograph or drawing produces a more vivid mental image of an object than the most highly polished

¹ In *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xxii.

word description.¹ It is difficult indeed to make words do the duty of eyes.

The one way partially to overcome the difficulties besetting word description seems to be this: Determine as precisely as you can the stages through which your own perception of an object has passed, and then describe the object in such a way as to compel the reader to follow these stages. The order of these stages has been indicated in a general way in the preceding section, and need not be gone over again here. It is of the utmost importance that you do not omit from the beginning of your description your first general impression of the object you describe. A common error is either to omit this first general impression altogether, or to report it, perhaps inaccurately, elsewhere than at the beginning of the description. In either case the details of the description lose in effectiveness by not being properly prepared for. It is this first general impression which prepares the way for the details that follow, and which gives to these details much of their significance. If each detail in a description is introduced in the order in which it is seen, and is properly prepared for by the first general impression,—if each detail in a description is made to grow out of the first general impression,—the reader is then enabled, as fully as he ever can be enabled by mere words, to see the object described as a whole and in all its parts.

Exercise 84

Write a description of three or four of the objects experimented with in Exercise 83, introducing the details in the order in which you

¹ At this stage it may be well to compare the arts of painting and sculpture with the art of description. The matter is thoroughly discussed in Lessing's *Laokoön*, chaps. xvi-xvii. See Exercise 92 (24).

saw them. Do not forget the caution about your first general impression of the object you describe.

SECTION 72

The Point of View

The point of view is important in description. In description of any sort you either take your stand at some point, and tell what you see from that point, or you pass among the objects you describe, and, taking your reader with you in imagination, describe them as you pass. This position is called the point of view. It may be stationary, — it most commonly is stationary, — or it may move from one place to another. If the point of view is stationary, the main thing is to keep from shifting it and introducing details which could not be seen from the point at which the reader is placed to look at the thing described. "The description of a prospect from some point near a river bank must not speak of the stream as a silver thread, nor of the coarse prairie grass all about as velvety. It would be an equally gross error were the same scene described from some high bluff, to speak of the prairie grass, with its gaudy flowers and its countless insects, as a miniature tropical forest, a comparison apt enough to a man lying on his back in the tangle of it."¹ If, on the other hand, the point of view is progressive, and the reader is led in imagination among the objects described, it is necessary to keep clearly in mind and to inform the reader of each change in the point of sight. The least vagueness here may render a description, otherwise admirable, confusing and even absurd. The reader must know not only what

¹C. S. Baldwin, *Specimens of Prose Description*, introduction.

he looks at, but the point from which he is supposed to look at it. No description can be effective which does not conform to this rule.

Exercise 85

1. Determine the point of view in each of the descriptive selections in this book. Is any detail introduced which could not be seen from the point of view adopted by the author?
2. Note in the following selection where the point of view changes, and how the reader is informed of the change:—

THE BULLER OF BUCHAN

Upon these rocks there was nothing that could long detain attention, and we soon turned our eyes to the Buller or Bouilloir of Buchan, which no man can see with indifference, who has either sense of danger or delight in rarity. It is a rock perpendicularly tubulated, united on one side with a high shore, and on the other rising steep to a great height above the main sea. The top is open, from which may be seen a dark gulf of water which flows into the cavity through a breach made in the lower part of the enclosing rock. It has the appearance of a vast well bordered with a wall. The edge of the Buller is not wide, and to those that walk round appears very narrow. He that ventures to look downward sees that if his foot should slip, he must fall from his dreadful elevation upon stones on one side, or into the water on the other. We, however, went round, and were glad when the circuit was completed.

When we came down to the sea we saw some boats and rowers, and resolved to explore the Buller at the bottom. We entered the arch, which the water had made, and found ourselves in a place which, though we could not think ourselves in danger, we could scarcely survey without some recoil of the mind. The basin in which we floated was nearly circular, perhaps thirty yards in diameter. We were enclosed by a natural wall, rising steep on every side to a height which produced the idea of insurmountable confinement. The interception of all lateral light caused a dismal gloom. Round us was a perpendicular rock, above us the distant sky, and below an unknown profundity of water. If I had any malice against a walking spirit,

instead of laying him in the Red Sea, I would condemn him to reside in the Buller of Buchan.—JOHNSON, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*.

3. Write a description of the view from a high hill. Indicate carefully the point of view.

4. Passing among the objects described in 3, indicate in your description each change in the point of view.

5. Describe a scene viewed from a tower or from a window in a high building.

6. Describe a busy street scene in a city from a window overlooking the street.

7. Describe the same scene as you pass down the street.

8. Describe a scene observed while riding on a train. Indicate clearly the point of view.

9. Write a description of a scene near your home during a sudden shower. Imagine that you are standing under the branches of a great oak, which partially shelter you from the down-pouring rain. Do not change the point of view.

10. Describe the house in which you live. Take your position at two or three advantageous points, and inform the reader when you change from one to the other.

11. Describe some interesting house or other building where you live, (1) from without and (2) from within. Inform the reader when you pass within the building.

12. Select several familiar objects or scenes which you think you would like to describe, and determine the best point of view from which to look at them.

13. Take a walk to a favorite retreat, and describe what you see on your way. Indicate every alteration in the point of sight.

SECTION 73

The Point of Time

A point of time is as essential to many descriptions as a point of view is to all descriptions. That is, the impression got from a landscape, for example, may be quite

different at one point of time from what it is at another. A forest in broad daylight is quite a different thing from what it is at midnight, as any small boy will tell you. Quite different, also, are a cold, dreary day in March and a burning, dusty day in August, or a meadow-land before and after a sudden thunder-storm. If time has any bearing at all on a description, it must be as definitely fixed as the point of view, and if the time changes, the reader must be just as carefully informed of the change as he is of a change in the point of sight.

Note, for instance, with what care the author of *A Dakota Prairie* (Exercise 82) indicates the change in time in the scene he describes. Such sentences as, "It was about five o'clock in a day in late June," "The silence of the prairie at night was well-nigh terrible," and "In the daytime, however, and especially on a morning, the prairie was another thing," not to mention the phrases and the words thrown in here and there to help in the time-effects, are essential to the description, and add not a little to its vividness. Note, also, how the time is indicated in the following stanzas, and how each change in time is made evident:—

MARIANA

BY TENNYSON

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreary house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"¹

Exercise 86

1. Determine the point of time in the descriptive selections in this book. If the point of time changes, note whether the reader is informed of the change.

2. Bring to the class two descriptive passages in which the point of time is an important factor.

3. Read *A Dakota Prairie*, and then describe the scene as you imagine it might appear in the winter.

4. Rewrite two of the descriptions you wrote for Exercise 85, putting in such touches of time as you think will add to the vividness of the descriptions.

5. Describe a city street scene during fair weather.

6. Describe the same scene after a sudden shower.

7. Describe a country road after a thunder-storm in June.

8. Write a description of a forest scene at midday of a hot day in August.

9. Write a description of the same scene in moonlight.

10. Describe the scene from a window in your house on a clear, calm morning.

11. Describe the same scene during a dense fog.

12. Describe a coast scene during a high wind.

13. Take a walk in the rain, and write your impressions.

14. Describe a scene about your home during a snow-storm.

15. Write a description of a summer farm scene,—a ploughing, cultivating, haying, harvesting, or corn-husking scene. Make the point of time a prominent element in your description. See the first selection in Exercise 82.

¹ The whole poem, of which only four stanzas are printed here, should be read to the class.

SECTION 74

The Central Thought

Compare these two bits of description: —

1. Third and fourth quills about equal, fifth a little shorter, second longer than sixth; tail slightly rounded; above olive-gray, top and sides of the head black; chin and throat white, streaked with black; eyelids, and a spot above the eye anteriorly, white; under parts and inside of the wings chestnut-brown; the under tail coverts with tibix white, showing the plumbeous inner portions of the feathers; wings dark-brown, the feathers all edged more or less with pale-ash; tail still darker, the extreme feathers tipped with white; bill yellow, dusky along the ridge and at the tip.—SAMUELS, *Birds of New England*.

2. But when vivid color is wanted, what can surpass or equal our cardinal-flower? There is a glow about this flower as if color emanated from it as from a live coal. The eye is baffled and does not seem to reach the surface of the petal; it does not see the texture or material part as it does in other flowers, but rests in a steady, still radiance. It is not so much something colored as it is color itself. And then the moist, cool, shady places it affects, usually where it has no floral rivals, and where the large, dark shadows need just such a dab of fire. Often, too, we see it double, its reflected image in some dark pool heightening its effect.—JOHN BURROUGHS, *Riverby*.

The difference between these two descriptions is instantly felt, but on what does it depend? Evidently the difference depends—aside from the controlling purpose—on the selection of details to emphasize a central thought. In the first description,—it is a scientific description of the common robin,—the details are listed one after the other without subordination—there has been no selection of details to emphasize a central thought. In the second description, on the contrary, each detail has been carefully selected and skilfully placed, and this

has been done for a purpose — to bring into prominence the central thought of the description, the vivid color of the cardinal flower.¹ The result of this difference is, as might be expected, that the second description is highly suggestive, and that the first description is most decidedly not suggestive. However serviceable the first description may be to science as a means of identification, it has no artistic value whatever.

Every description, therefore, if it is to be at all effective for any other than a merely explanatory purpose, should have a central thought, or produce a single distinct impression, made strikingly prominent by careful selection and skilful subordination of details. This central thought, this single distinct impression, should be the thought, or the impression, that leaps to the senses when the object to be described is first beheld. Then, with this central thought, this single distinct impression, used as a guide, only such details should be selected as will, when properly subordinated, bring it prominently to the attention of the reader.

Exercise 87

What the central thought of a description may be, and how it can be emphasized by selection and subordination of details, will best be understood by a study of the following pieces of description. ~~What is~~ the central thought in each of these descriptions? How is this central thought made evident to the reader? What details emphasize it?

¹ The central thought, even in the most effective descriptions, is not always as definitely stated as in this case. Often enough the central thought is not stated at all, it being merely some single distinct impression that pervades the whole description; as, for example, the great loneliness of Mariana in Tennyson's poem (Section 73), or the air of gloom, mystery, or horror that pervades many of the situations in Poe's stories.



What details are subordinated or subdued to the central thought? Can you think of any details that the author might have included in his description, but has not? That is, what details are suppressed in order to emphasize the central thought?

DOVER CLIFF

Edgar. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Gloucester. Set me where you stand.

Edgar. Give me your hand; you are now within a foot
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright. — KING LEAR, Act IV, scene vi, lines 11-27.

IN THE STEEPLE

But high up in the steeple! There the foul blast roars and whistles! High up in the steeple, where it is free to come and go through many an airy arch and loophole, and to twist and twine itself about the giddy stair, and twirl the groaning weather-cock, and make the very tower shake and shiver! High up in the steeple where the belfry is, and iron rails are ragged with rust, and sheets of lead and copper, shrivelled by the changing weather, crackle and heave beneath the unaccustomed tread; and birds stuff shabby nests into corners of old oaken joints and beams; and dust grows old and gray; and speckled spiders, indolent and fat with long security, swing idly to and fro in

the vibrations of the bells, and never loose their hold upon their thread-spun castles in the air, or climb up sailor-like in quick alarm, or drop upon the ground and ply a score of nimble legs to save a life! — DICKENS, *The Chimes*.

A THUNDER-STORM

Pretty soon it darkened up, and began to thunder and lighten; so the birds was right about it. Directly it began to rain, and it rained like all fury, too, and I never see the wind blow so. It was one of these regular summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue black outside, and lovely; and the rain would thrash along by so thick that the trees off a little ways looked dim and spider-webby; and here would come a blast of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the pale under side of the leaves; and then a perfect ripper of a gust would follow along and set the branches to tossing their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest — *fst!* it was as bright as glory, and you'd have a little glimpse of tree-tops a-plunging about away off yonder in the storm, hundreds of yards further than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and now you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful crash, and then go rumbling, grumbling, tumbling down the sky towards the under side of the world, like rolling empty barrels downstairs — where it's long stairs and they bounce a good deal, you know. — MARK TWAIN, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

A DISMAL DAY IN THE CITY

There had been a hesitating fall of snow in the morning, but before noon it had turned to a wild and fitful rain that had finally modified itself into a clinging mist as evening drew near. The heavy snow-storm of the last week in January had left the streets high on both sides with banks that thawed swiftly whenever the sun came out again, the water running from them into the broad gutters, and then freezing hard at night, when the cold wind swept across the city. Now, at nightfall, after a muggy day, a sickening slush had spread itself treacherously over all the crossings. The shop-girls going home had to pick their way cautiously from corner to corner under the iron pillars supporting the station of the elevated railroad. Train followed train overhead, each close on the other's heels; and clouds of

steam swirled down as the engines came to a full stop with a shrill grinding of the brakes. From the skeleton spans of the elevated road moisture dripped on the cable-cars below, as they rumbled along with their bells clanging sharply when they neared the crossings. The atmosphere was thick with a damp haze; and there was a halo about every yellow globe in the windows of the bar-rooms at the four corners of the avenue. More frequent, as the dismal day wore to an end, was the hoarse and lugubrious tooting of the ferry-boats in the East River. — BRANDER MATTHEWS, *Outlines of Local Color*.

MR. TIGG

The gentleman was of that order of appearance which is currently termed shabby-genteel, though in respect of his dress he can hardly be said to have been in any extremities, as his fingers were a long way out of his gloves, and the soles of his feet were at an inconvenient distance from the upper leather of his boots. His nether garments were of a bluish gray — violent in its colors once, but sobered now by age and dinginess — and were so stretched and strained in a tough conflict between his braces and his straps, that they appeared every moment in danger of flying asunder at the knees. His coat, in color blue and of a military cut, was buttoned and frogged up to the chin. His cravat was, in hue and pattern, like one of those mantles which hairdressers are accustomed to wrap about their clients, during the progress of their professional mysteries. His hat had arrived at such a pass that it would have been hard to determine whether it was originally white or black. But he wore a mustache — a shaggy mustache too: nothing in the meek and merciful way, but quite in the fierce and scornful style — the regular Satanic sort of thing; and he wore, besides, a vast quantity of unbrushed hair. He was very dirty and very jaunty; very bold and very mean; very swaggering and very slinking; very much like a man who might have been something better, and unspeakably like a man who deserved to be something worse. — DICKENS, *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Exercise 88

1. Find three descriptive selections in this book, not including those printed in Exercise 87, which have a prominent central thought and show a careful selection of details to emphasize that thought.

2. Find a similar descriptive passage in some other book. Bring the book to the class, and be prepared to tell what the central thought of the description is and how the central thought is emphasized.

3. Select some object or scene, — a room, a person, a building, a street scene, or a landscape, — and make as complete a list as you can of the details you observe. Does this exercise prove that selection of some sort is always necessary in describing an object? Are not the details of even the simplest of objects too numerous and too complex to catalogue completely?

4. Select some object or scene that interests you, and write a description of it. Note first the most salient feature of the thing you wish to describe, or your strongest impression of it, and then select such details as will emphasize that feature or that impression.

SECTION 75

Rapid Suggestion

Most description, as has been stated, is fragmentary, and much even of what is fragmentary does not go into details. Many an object is so familiar in all its details that the mere mention of the object itself, with a word or two thrown in to suggest its main aspect, is all that is needed to flash an image of it upon the reader's mind. Indeed, the problem ever before you is to produce the true impression with the least number of details. "One long, lurid pencil-stroke along a sky of slate was all that was left of daylight" (CABLE), "The moon was sinking behind the hills, and the lines of trembling monkeys huddled together on the walls and battlements looked like ragged, shaky fringes of things" (KIPLING), and the like, are more vivid than whole pages of the ordinary kind of description. They start the mind to working out the picture for itself, which is the most that description can hope to accomplish. It is worth knowing, then, how to



make use of this art of rapid suggestion, — how to produce a vivid impression with a few salient details.

Here are a few more examples of rapid suggestion: —

He could just discern the cypresses of the old school garden, like two black lines down the yellow walls. — PATER, *Marius the Epicurean*.

He rode towards Tibur, under the early sunshine; the marble of its villas glistening all the way before him on the hillside. — *Ibid.*

"A slight figure," said Mr. Peggotty, looking at the fire, "kiender worn; soft, sorrowful, blue eyes; a delicate face; a pritty head, leaning a little down; a quiet voice and way—timid a'most. That's Em'ly!" — DICKENS, *David Copperfield*.

In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast substantial smile. — DICKENS.

An ivory-faced and silvery-haired old woman opened the door. She had an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy, but her manners were excellent. — STEVENSON, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

One moment had been burnt into his life as its chief epoch—a moment full of July sunshine and large pink roses shedding their last petals on a grassy court enclosed on three sides by a Gothic cloister. Imagine him in such a scene: a boy of thirteen, stretched prone on the grass where it was in shadow, his curly head propped on his arms over a book, while his tutor, also reading, sat on a camp-stool under shelter. — GEORGE ELIOT, *Daniel Deronda*.

The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plough-horse, that had outlived almost everything but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck and a head like a hammer; his rusty mane and tail were tangled and knotted with burrs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral; but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. — IRVING, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

Exercise 89

1. Find, in prose and poetry, other examples of rapid suggestion; copy them and bring them to the class.
2. Describe in a sentence or two, by means of rapid suggestion, the appearance of some person you know. Try to make your description suggest the person's character.
3. Write a brief description of one of the following things, making

as much use of suggestion as you can: (1) a town seen from a distance, (2) the swift approach of rain (seen some way off and blown towards you by the wind), (3) the tossing of tree-tops in a violent wind storm, (4) a wagon clattering by on a stone pavement, (5) the branches of an oak, (6) the branches of a "weeping willow," (7) the color of some flower, (8) the distinguishing trait of some animal, (9) the shadow of a moving cloud, (10) the indications of coming snow or rain. Add to this list other similar topics.

SECTION 76

The Value of the Specific

A description, if it is to be clear and vivid, must be specific. The details, whether few or many, must be specific, and the words naming the details must likewise be specific. This is easily illustrated. Take any bit of effective description, turn its details and diction into general terms, and note how much of the moving power of the description is lost. Take, for example, this descriptive sentence, quoted in the last section:—

He rode towards Tibur, under the early sunshine; the marble of its villas glistening all the way before him on the hillside.

Now, translate the sentence into general terms:—

He went towards the town, in the early morning; the stone of its buildings shining all the way before him on the height.

"Went," "the town," "early morning," "shining," and "height" are more general than "rode," "Tibur," "early sunshine," "marble," "glistening," and "hillside," and, because they are general, fail utterly to stir the imagination of the reader.

The way to get specific details into a description is to write with "the eye on the object,"¹ and the way to get

¹ Even in fiction it is well to base the description on actual persons, objects, and scenes.

specific diction into a description is to hunt for the apt and specific word until it is found. Though each word in a description should tell, the adjectives, the nouns, and even the verbs, because of their very prominence, demand more than ordinary care in their choice. Frequently enough, as has been suggested before this, a few well-chosen words will take the place of a whole page of careless description, — of description, that is, in which words are used to avoid the trouble of seeing and picturing the thing described as it really is.¹

Exercise 90

1. Point out the specific words in three of the selections in Exercise 87.

2. Make a list of the nouns in two of the selections in Exercise 87. Make a list of the adjectives in the same selections. Make a list of the verbs. Underscore the specific words in the three lists. Are there any specific words in the selections which are not nouns, adjectives, or verbs?

3. Do you find details in any of the selections which indicate that the author wrote with his "eye on the object" he described? Any details which indicate that the author did not write with his "eye on the object"?

4. Examine the specific element in several of your own descriptions. Do you find a chance for improvement?

5. Write one of the descriptions suggested in Exercise 92, putting into the description as much of the specific as you can.

SECTION 77

Sensations Other than of Sight

Up to this point description has been treated mainly as if it were a sort of word instrument to record sensations

¹ Read Section 47 again; also see Exercises 78-80 (Helps to Study).

of sight only, but description—and the art of word description has here some advantage over the art of painting—can suggest sensations of hearing, of touch, of smell, and even of taste. In other words, description covers, more or less effectively, the whole range of a man's sensations, and the power of any one person to describe his sensations is measured, putting aside the limitation inherent in words as a means of expression, by the sharpness of his senses and his power over words.

Observe how sensations other than of sight are suggested in the following descriptions ; as, of hearing : ¹—

His room was on the north side of the street, and the morning sun shone in his window, as he lay back in the chair, grateful for its warmth. A heavy cart lumbered along slowly over the worn and irregular pavement ; it came to a stand at the corner, and a gang of workmen swiftly emptied it of the steel rails it contained, dropping them on the sidewalk one by one with a loud clang which reverberated harshly far down the street. From the little knot of men who were relaying the horse-car track came cries of command, and then a rail would drop into position, and be spiked swiftly to its place. Then the laborers would draw aside while an arrested horse-car urged forward again, with the regular footfall of its one horse, as audible above the mighty roar of the metropolis as the jingle of the little bell on the horse's collar. At last there came from over the house-tops a loud whistle of escaping steam, followed shortly by a dozen similar signals, proclaiming the midday rest. A rail or two more clanged down on the others, and then the cart rumbled away. The workmen relaying the track had already seated themselves on the curb to eat their dinner, while one of them had gone to the saloon at

¹ Silence, as well as sound, can be suggested. In this connection, examine the paragraph beginning with "The silence of the night," etc. (Exercise 82), and the last two stanzas of "Mariana" (Section 73). Tiny noises—the buzz of a fly, the squeak of a mouse, the ticking of a clock, the step of a fox—and the straining of the ear to catch the slightest sound are among the means used to suggest silence.

the corner for a large can of the new beer advertised in the window by the gaudy lithograph of a frisky young goat bearing a plump young goddess on his back.—BRANDER MATTHEWS, *Vignettes of Manhattan*.

of touch : —

I found Uriah [Heep] reading a great fat book, with such demonstrative attention, that his lank forefinger followed up every line as he read, and made clammy tracks along the page (or so I fully believed) like a snail. . . . It was no fancy of mine about his hands, I observed; for he frequently ground the palms against each other as if to squeeze them dry and warm, besides often wiping them, in a stealthy way, on his pocket-handkerchief. . . . After shaking hands with me—his hand felt like a fish, in the dark—he opened the door into the street a very little, and crept out, and shut it, leaving me to grope my way back into the house; which cost me some trouble and a fall over his stool.—DICKENS, *David Copperfield*.

of smell : —

Indeed, it required a nose both subtle and unprejudiced to understand and appreciate and thoroughly enjoy that Paris—[the Paris before the second empire] . . .

There were whole streets—and these by no means the least fascinating and romantic—where the unwritten domestic records of every house were afloat in the air outside it—records not all savory or sweet, but always full of interest and charm!

One knew at a sniff as one passed the *porte cochère* what kind of people lived behind and above; what they ate and what they drank, and what their trade was; whether they did their washing at home, and burned tallow or wax, and mixed chicory with their coffee, and were over-fond of Gruyère cheese—the biggest, cheapest, plainest, and most formidable cheese in the world; whether they fried with oil or butter, and liked their omelets overdone and garlic in their salad, and sipped black-currant brandy or anisette as a liqueur; and were overrun with mice, and used cats or mouse-traps to get rid of them, or neither; and bought violets, or pinks, or gillyflowers in season, and kept them too long; and fasted on Friday with red or white beans, or lentils, or had a dispensation from the Pope—or,

haply, even dispensed with the Pope's dispensation. — GEORGE DU MAURIER, *Peter Ibbetson*.¹

of taste : —

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.

— KEATS, *The Eve of St. Agnes*.

Exercise 91

1. Find at least three passages describing sensations other than of sight.
2. Study the descriptive selections in this book to determine how much of them is given up to sensations of sight.
3. Write a description, dealing with some other sensation than of sight.

Exercise 92

EXERCISES IN DESCRIPTION

1. Describe your school building for some boy or girl who expects to enter as a student, but who has never seen the building.
2. Describe a dwelling-house for a family who think of moving.
3. Describe a country road on a rainy night, with horse and carriage coming towards you from a distance.
4. Describe the crowd in a large department store on bargain day.

¹ Look up the paragraphs that follow this last paragraph.

5. Describe a pond, some pleasant nook in the woods, a fishing hole, a thicket, a spring, a noteworthy tree, or similar object, so that some one else, who knows nothing about it, can find it.

6. Describe some room of a house, — parlor, library, sitting room, dining room, or kitchen, — in such a way as to make clear the family traits of the people who live in the house.

7. Describe the most foppish looking boy in the class. Describe the most handsome; the most distinguished looking; the happiest looking; the most sober.

8. Describe in a sentence or two the voice of some person talking. Look up the description of voices of characters in works of fiction to know how to do this. Make a list of the adjectives, figures, and so on, which you find used for this purpose.

9. Describe the manner of walk of a drunkard; of an old man; of a strong, athletic man. Use your own observations only.

10. Describe for a city boy some one of the following things: (1) The parlor of a country hotel; (2) a country store; (3) a country fisherman; (4) a country gossip; (5) a village humorist; (6) a place where hazelnuts are found. This list, which may be added to indefinitely, may suggest subjects which will be suitable to describe for a country boy or girl.

11. Find some picture in a recent or an old number of a magazine — select a really good picture — and describe it. If you can find two pictures dealing with the same subject, and will compare or contrast them, the work will be even more interesting.

12. Describe the personal appearance of some strikingly odd character you have met. Before beginning this work, make a list of the adjectives you think of which may be used to describe the prominent features of a person — eyes, nose, hair, manner, figure, and expression. Thus, the eyes may be described as startled, laughing, heavy-lidded, noticeable, expressive, dreamy, or speaking eyes, etc.

13. Describe some bit of natural scenery: (1) A brook; (2) a solitary tree; (3) a waterfall; (4) a river; (5) a woodland; (6) a mountain; (7) a lake; (8) a wooded hill; (9) the shore of the ocean; (10) a prairie; (11) a landscape similar to one you have seen in some picture. Visit the scene to be described, and write your description with the scene before your eyes — just as a painter would paint it.

14. Describe some object or scene, using a diagram or sketch to supplement your word description.

15. Find in some work of fiction a rather full description of some one of the characters, and then try to describe the same character in a sentence or two by means of rapid suggestion. Make the experiment with five or six characters of different ages and temperaments.

16. In description much use can be made of the emotions aroused in a beholder or a listener—description by effect, as it is sometimes called. The following passage is an example:—

There is not a man yet alive who has forgotten the tones of Nathan's flute as they soared that night through the clouds of tobacco smoke that filled the great banquet-hall. Every shade and gradation of tone was a delight. Now soft as the cooing of doves, now low as the music of a brook rippling over the shallows and again swelling into song like a chorus of birds rejoicing in the coming of spring.

Not until the voice in the slender instrument had become silent and the last note of Richard's bow had ceased reverberating—not, in fact, until both men had laid down their instruments, and had turned from the piano—did the room seem to recover from the spell that had bound it. Even then there was no applause; no clapping of hands nor stamping of feet. There followed, from members and guests alike, only a deep, pent-up sigh and a long breath of relief, as if from a strain unbearable. Simmons, who had sat with his head buried in his hands, gave no other sign of his approval than by rising from his chair, taking Nathan's thin hand in his own and grasping it tightly, without a word. Stedman blurted out, in a low voice to himself: "My God! Who ever heard anything like that?" and remained fixed in his seat. As for Richard and Nathan, they resumed their places on the divan as men who had read a message not their own to willing ears.—F. HOPKINSON SMITH, *The Fortunes of Oliver Horn*, chap. xxiii.

Try to find other examples of this same sort of description.

17. Write a description of one of the following things, giving the effect of the thing upon some beholder or listener—yourself if you choose: (1) a person seen for the first time; (2) some bit of natural scenery (see 13 above); (3) an eloquent speaker; (4) a moving scene at the theatre; (5) a stirring plea in defence of a man on trial for his life; (6) a midnight song.

18. Write a description of something that arouses one of these emotions: (1) Disgust; (2) contempt; (3) fear; (4) sorrow.

19. Note how, in the last sentence of the first paragraph of the selection in 16 above, comparison is made use of to describe the tones of the flute's music. Find other examples of this sort of description, and then try to describe something by means of comparison. Comparison is especially effective in describing sensations other than of sight.

20. Find a good picture of one of the following persons, and then describe the person from the picture: Washington, Franklin, Lafayette, King George III, Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, Webster, Queen Victoria.

21. Write a description of one of the characters named in Exercise 71 (2).

22. Write a description of any fictitious person that interests you.

23. Try to describe accurately the features of some person whose photograph you have. Bring the photograph to class to see if your description can be recognized.

24. CLASS EXERCISE: Study some picture to ascertain just what a word description can do that a picture cannot. Which of the two, word description or picture, has the advantage in describing color? Form? Light? Sound? Odor? Motion? Heat?

25. Describe some person you know in such a way as to give some hint of his character. You can find a model in almost any novel or history.

26. Find a description of some place. Make an outline of the description, and, after two or three days, write the description from the outline. Describe a place near where you live.

27. Write a description of your most intimate friend. Put in a few character touches.

28. Write a letter to some one, giving a general description of the town in which you live. You may imagine that the person to whom you are writing has expressed a desire to move to your town.

29. Describe some store or church in your town so as to suggest the traits of the community.

30. On one of the following subjects write a descriptive paragraph. Most of the subjects in the list are stated in a general form, — "a mountain cottage," "a country schoolhouse," etc., — and should be

made strictly definite before being written on. That is, write about some mountain cottage, some country schoolhouse, that you yourself now, and, by all means, write with your eye on it while you write.

1. A mountain cottage.
2. A mud-puddle.
3. Our old homestead.
4. A deserted picnic ground.
5. A blacksmith's shop.
6. A shop window full of toys.
7. An old-fashioned room.
8. A street musician.
9. The scene from my window.
10. An old rickety house.
11. A country house.
12. Clouds by moonlight.
13. Seen through the fog.
14. An old bridge; at sunrise and at sunset.
15. A pond.
16. A country schoolhouse.
17. A vegetable garden.
18. A farmer at work.
19. The assembly room at school.
20. A snow-plough.
21. My own front dooryard.

CHAPTER VIII

EXPLANATION¹ AND ARGUMENT

SECTION 78

The Nature of Explanation

After narration (most talk and writing has to do with the telling of every-day experiences), explanation is the commonest form of discourse. You use explanation, for instance, when you set forth your ideas about the weather or about the news in the morning paper, when you direct a stranger to a house in your neighborhood, when you demonstrate a problem in geometry or in algebra, when you make a reflection on an experiment in physics or in chemistry, when you expound the meaning of a passage in an English or in a foreign classic, or when, on the hundred and one other occasions every day, you make a statement, or express an opinion, in which you try to make clear your thoughts about this, that, or the other thing. So does the lawyer use explanation, when he makes clear the principles on which a case turns; so does the physician, when he explains the nature of an ailment; so does the journalist, when he comments on a piece of news; so does the man of affairs, when he gives direction about his business. In fact, there is not a trade or a profession you can adopt that will not make large demands on your power to explain your ideas.²

¹ Explanation is sometimes called exposition.

² See what is said about this in *A Word at the Start*, pp. xxiii-xxvii.

What, then, is explanation? The purpose of explanation, you learned at the beginning of Part III, is to make more definite certain thoughts—to explain them. Like argument, explanation deals mainly with the inner world of thoughts and the relation of thoughts. Like argument, also, explanation appeals to the understanding, its object being chiefly to *teach* the reader. Unlike argument, however, explanation is concerned with what a thought *is*, rather than with the truth or falsity of a thought. When you try to convince a fellow-camper that it is harder to make a smudge than it is to build a camp cooking-fire, you argue the truth and falsity of a thought, but when you tell some one who has never camped how to build a smudge, you incidentally explain what a thought *is*—in this case, what the thought “smudge” is.

Here, by the way, is an explanation of “smudge”:—

HOW TO MAKE A SMUDGE¹

The smudge is called into being for the express purpose of creating [a thick, nauseating, intolerable smoke], which is as disagreeable to the mosquito, and black-fly, and the midge as it is to the man whom they are devouring. But the man survives the smoke, while the insects succumb to it, being destroyed or driven away. Therefore the smudge, dark and bitter in itself, frequently becomes, like adversity, sweet in its uses. It must be regarded as a form of fire with which man has made friends under the pressure of a cruel necessity.

It would seem as if it ought to be the simplest affair in the world to light up a smudge. And so it is—if you are not trying.

An attempt to produce almost any other kind of fire will bring forth smoke abundantly. But when you deliberately undertake to create a smudge, flames break from the wettest timber, and green moss blazes with a furious heat. You hastily gather handfuls of seemingly incombustible material and throw it on the fire, but the con-

¹ Printed by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

flagration increases. Grass and green leaves hesitate for an instant and then flash up like tinder. The more you put on, the more your smudge rebels against its proper task of smudging. It makes a pleasant warmth, to encourage the black-flies; and bright light to attract and cheer the mosquitoes. Your effort is a brilliant failure.

The proper way to make a smudge is this. Begin with a very little, lowly fire. Let it be bright but not ambitious. Don't try to make a smoke yet.

Then gather a good supply of stuff which seems likely to suppress fire without smothering it. Moss of a certain kind will do, but not the soft, feathery moss that grows so deep among the spruce trees. Half-decayed wood is good; spongy, moist, unpleasant stuff, a vegetable wet blanket. The bark of dead evergreen trees, hemlock, spruce, or balsam, is better still. Gather a plentiful store of it. But don't try to make a smoke yet.

Let your fire burn a while longer; cheer it up a little. Get some clear, resolute, unquenchable coals aglow in the heart of it. Don't try to make a smoke yet.

Now pile on your smouldering fuel. Fan it with your hat. Kneel down and blow it, and in ten minutes you will have a smoke that will make you wish you had never been born.

That is the proper way to make a smudge. But the easiest way is to ask your guide to make it for you. — HENRY VAN DYKE, *Fisherman's Luck*.

Now, just what has Dr. Van Dyke done in this explanation? For one thing, he has made clear his notion of the thought "smudge," and he has done this most entertainingly by telling us how a smudge is made. Though he has used many particulars in his explanation—things, he has been mainly concerned with making clear his notion of smudge in general, a thought that had no existence outside his own mind. For had he written about some particular smudge—the smudge his guide made at Lunge Lake, or the smudge he himself made at Mill Bend, say—he would have written about a thing that did exist

outside his own mind, and what he wrote would most likely have been a description colored with bits of narration. He would then have told us, doubtless, just the sort of material used in that particular smudge, how long the smudge was in making, the density of the smoke, the success or failure of the experiment in that particular instance, and so on. His purpose would then have been quite different, and the resulting piece of writing would have been just as different.

SECTION 79

Methods of Explanation

All the while you were working through Parts I and II of this book, you were really studying and practising explanation, for the first two parts of the book are based on the explanatory paragraph and the explanatory sentence. When you learned how to construct a paragraph by telling what a thing is, for example, you learned at the same time how to explain a term¹ by means of definition (Section 16); when you learned how to construct a paragraph by telling what a thing is *not*, you learned then how to make clear a term by means of reversion (Section 17); and so with comparison (Section 18), and contrast (Section 19), and example (Section 20), and restatement (Section 21).

At that time, however, it did not seem best to say anything about explanation as such, or to distinguish it from the other kinds of writing. Your chief concern then was with the paragraph. But now that you know what explanation is, you can apply directly to it the methods you

¹ A term is defined in Section 81.

learned in Sections 16-21.¹ More often than not probably, in explaining a term, you will need to combine some two or three of the methods treated in Chapter II, and you may even discover and apply some method not treated in this book, for, as was said in Section 15, only the most typical methods are here treated.

But whatever method or methods you make use of in your explanations, you will do well to remember that the secret of all good explanation lies in the sorting and grouping of facts in such a way that one group can be considered before the next group is taken up. Dr. Van Dyke, for instance, in his explanation of a smudge (Section 78), first sorted all his facts into groups, so that related thoughts were brought together, and then took up one group at a time, considered it as if it were a distinct and separate step in the process of making a smudge, and, after that, went on to the next group. First, he stated the purpose of a smudge, then the difficulties of making a smudge, and next, chiefly in the order of time, each particular thing to do in the actual making of a smudge, from the first slow fire to "the smoke that makes you wish you had never been born." At last you understand what a smudge is, and you understand because you see all the facts about a smudge brought together and arranged in order. You understand because you have stood by while the painter filled in his canvas.

Dr. Van Dyke's explanation is clear in style, too, and anything but dull, facts that suggest two valuable lessons in the making of good explanations. Since the essence of all explanation is to make clear to others the thoughts in our own minds, an explanation is poor indeed that is not

¹ Select your subjects from Exercise 93.

clear in style. Unless we can explain our thoughts clearly to others, it is useless ever to pretend that our thoughts are clear to ourselves.¹ That an explanation should not be dull is evident enough. Indeed, if it is to arouse and hold the interest of the reader, it must have about it a certain air of liveliness. A writer with a lively imagination will have no difficulty here, but a person of even ordinary talent can enliven an explanation by now and then dashing in a touch of his own personality, by making frequent and apt allusions to things familiar and yet not commonplace, and by using enough specific and figurative words to break up any monotony that may arise from the discussion of general principles.

Exercise 93

EXERCISES IN EXPLANATION

1. Read the following paragraph, and then explain in a similar manner how some other game is played; as, bunching eggs, telling fortunes, trying for a raisin, the Fairy's gifts, forfeits, choosing up and "It," counting out, some game of tag, hop-scotch, plug in the ring, town-ball, house-ball, tip-cat, or anything of the like:—

"JACK'S ALIVE!"

Having built a small bonfire in some vacant lot, all the boys squat around it like so many Indians about their campfire. A cork on the end of a stick is thrust into the blaze and allowed to remain there until it becomes well lighted. Then, by using the stick for a handle,

¹ A simple diagram or outline drawing, with a few letters or numerals for reference, is sometimes an invaluable aid in making an explanation clear. To the engineer who explains the workings of a machine, to the architect who devises a plan for a building, or to the man of science who illustrates, say, the structure and anatomy of some animal, diagrams and figures are indispensable. Without such devices as these, dictionaries and text-books in science would lose much of their value.

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"JACK'S ALIVE!"

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one of the boys withdraws the cork, and, blowing out the flame, but leaving the red glowing end of the cork, exclaims, "Jack's alive!" and passes it to the next boy to the right. This boy blows the cork to see if the end still glows, and repeats the words, "Jack's alive!" as he hands it to his companion at his right. As the hot end becomes duller the boys pass it with greater haste, each repeating, "Jack's alive!" until the time arrives when no amount of blowing will bring to life the dead embers on the cork. Then "Jack is dead!" and the boy holding the dead Jack must submit to having the score marked on his face. One black mark only can be made for one dead Jack. The first mark may be on one side of the player's upper lip representing one-half of a mustache. The cork is then again placed in the fire while the boys sit around and wait for Jack to come to life again. Then the cork is again passed around with the same remarks, until Jack again expires and another lad is decorated with the half of a mustache or a big black eyebrow or a round black dot on his cheek. — D. C. BEARD, *The Outdoor Handy Book*, 320-321.

2. Read the following paragraph, and then explain in a similar manner how some other article is made, or how some task is done; as, how to set up a tent, a water wheel, or a springboard, how to put up a swing, how to preserve flowers, how to sweep a room, how to sew on a button, how to patch, how to make May baskets, a hat rack, a hammock, a butterfly fan, a Mother Goose scrapbook, an ornamental waste basket, a novel card receiver, a willow whistle, a successful rabbit trap, or anything else of the sort:—

HOW TO MAKE A BUCKEYE PORTIERE

Who has not admired the dark-brown, glossy buckeyes and horse-chestnuts, and wondered what use could be made of them? . . . Now, the next time the buckeyes are collected save every one and make a buckeye portière. . . . Two full bushels of buckeyes will be needed to make a curtain two yards and a half long and one yard and a quarter wide. Take a very large, long needle and a strong, waxed thread a little longer than you desire to have your curtain, make a large knot in the end of the thread, and commence to string your buckeyes in the same way as stringing beads or buttons. Continue until the thread in the needle is exhausted, then tie the thread in a

large knot close to the last buckeye, leaving a length of three inches of thread. Make your other strands in the same way. When all are finished, fasten as many small screw-eyes in a straight line on a curtain-pole, or a rustic pole if desired, as there are strands of buckeyes, and tie securely to each screw-eye one string of buckeyes. When all are fastened on, your portière is finished and ready to be hung. This is easily accomplished if the pole used is a regular curtain-pole, as they always come with brackets; but should your pole be rustic, it must be supported by bands of strong birch-bark, or leather.—L. BEARD and A. B. BEARD, *The American Girls' Handy Book*, 204-205.

3. Read these two criticisms:—

The Battle with the Slum. By Jacob A. Riis. Illustrated. The Macmillan Co., New York. 6 x 8½ in. 465 pages. \$2, net.

Mr. Riis vitalizes every subject that he touches, and in this volume he has vitalized sociology. He has put his own life into the battle with the slum, and the book which is the outcome is almost as personal as *The Making of an American*—or, at all events, it is much more personal than most autobiographies. The larger part of this volume has already been reviewed in these columns under the title “A Ten Years’ War,” but in extending that narrative so as to cover the work of the last three years—much of it along new lines of civic betterment—Mr. Riis has practically recast the whole, while the publishers, by means of new and effective illustrations, have created a new book as attractive to the eye as it is stimulating to the social conscience. Mr. Riis believes that in the last three years we have advanced more than in the preceding thirty, and while this courageous bit of optimism may not win the assent of the reader’s judgment, it is pretty sure to win his heart, and infect it with a desire to take part in the same hopeful struggle. Mr. Riis’s optimism is not of the kind which says that “all is going well, therefore we need not struggle,” but of that which says that “all is going well if we struggle.” In other words, it is not the optimism which produces smug complacency, but that which produces exalted endeavor.—*The Outlook*, January 3, 1903.

It is Kipling who knows best, among all writers, how to ingratiate himself into the hearts and memories of the little folks,—he takes them on his lap and “explains things” to them,—and so it certainly

must be that in this season's literary About Ben Adhem's "book of gold" his name "leads all the rest."

Not only is the volume of *Just So Stories* (Doubleday, Page & Co.) a jolly story-book, but the author has drawn the pictures as well as written "the reading that goes all around them, just the easiest part." And while in these illustrations he does not wholly eclipse the picture-book makers to childhood, his graphic creations do dovetail so nicely with his verbal narrations that the young folks will never demand a "Just So" edition with any other illustrations. And these graffiti he has further firmly united to the text by ample explanatory captions, that in a naïve way go into detail of the panorama and explain not only what has been put in the composition, but what has been left out, and the reasons thereof. "I have not drawn Suleiman-ben Daoud," says Kipling, "but he is just outside the picture, very much astonished." Again: "The skin is just under the rocks, below the palm tree, in a cool place; that is why you can't see it;" and, "I haven't drawn the horsehide curtain at the mouth of the Cave, because the Woman has just taken it down to be cleaned."

Mr. Kipling understands his child audience, and takes them into his confidence with little asides like these, and further admissions of his own shortcomings as an artist or writer, as "There are two other things that look like rats, but I think they are jack rabbits;" and again, "All that black stuff is the banks of the gray-green greasy Limpopo River (but I am not allowed to paint these pictures)." All will heartily wish Mr. Kipling had been allowed to paint his pictures, and we can only hope that the publishers may issue a future edition with his colored illustrations.—*The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, December, 1902.

Now write a criticism, a paragraph or two in length, of some book you have recently read. Try first to ascertain the author's purpose in writing the book, and then try to form a judgment as to how far he has succeeded in his undertaking. Give in a few sentences the gist of the contents of the book, so that the reader may know what it is all about.

4. Write a longer criticism, adopting the following order:—

(1) Tell who the author is and why he is well or ill qualified for his task, state his purpose in writing the book, and explain the

particular circumstances, if these are interesting, under which he wrote the book.

(2) Give a brief summary of the contents of the book. As this is likely to be the most valuable and interesting part of your review, give it the most space.

(3) Express your opinion of the merits of the book. Try to analyze your impression. Explain *why* you like the book, or *why* you dislike it. Remember that criticism is not mere faultfinding.

A brief paragraph may be given to the first and the third divisions, and perhaps two or three paragraphs to the second division.

5. Write a criticism of (1) a picture, (2) a piece of statuary, (3) the architecture of a building, (4) a musical concert, (5) a magazine article, (6) the illustrations in a recent number of some magazine; include the cover, (7) a play, (8) a recent poem, (9) a novel, (10) a book of travels, (11) a biography, (12) a history.

6. Write a summary, one or two paragraphs in length, of an article in the *Outlook*, *Forum*, *Arena*, *North American Review*, or any other magazine that your instructor suggests.

7. In most communities there are persons who, because of their oddities, cause a good deal of comment on the part of their neighbors. Write a paragraph on the character of one such person whom you know. Try to be fair in your statements.

8. Think of some person who has more than ordinary influence in your town or city. Determine first the reasons for this influence, and then write a paragraph on the person's character.

9. Two of your friends are pretty much of a contrast, not alone in their bearing and appearance, but also in what they do and in their influence on their associates. Contrast the two. See Section 19. Better not read 7, 8, and 9 to the class.

10. Explain some organization that you know something about. What is its purpose? How does it seek to accomplish this purpose? What success has it had? The school debating society, the girls' club, the Christian Endeavor Society, the Epworth League, or some similar institution, may be written about in this manner.

11. Write an explanation of the aims and purposes of some one of the following occupations or professions:—

THE WORTH OF A CALLING

With these eccentric and most unfashionable ideas in my mind, I have roughly tabulated some of the leading occupations and professions in what I conceive to be the order of their intrinsic worth, having regard to three elements,—their operation on the man himself, their usefulness to mankind, and the prospect of success which they afford.

I. Callings which, although unproductive, are immediately and directly beneficial both to the individual and to the community; such as,—(1) Medicine and Surgery; (2) Education; (3) Literature; (4) Art; (5) The Merchant Navy; (6) The Indian Civil Service; (7) The Clerical Profession.

II. Callings which are directly productive; such as,—(8) Agriculture; (9) Manufactures of necessary and useful articles.

III. Callings which are only mediately or indirectly productive; such as,—(10) Commerce; (11) Trade; (12) Engineering (civil and mechanical); (13) Agriculture and Building; (14) Banking; (15) Printing.

IV. Callings which are still more remote from production; such as,—(16) Agencies of all kinds, *e.g.*, Stockbroking; (17) The Law; (18) The Civil Service; (19) Clerkly work of all kinds.

V. Callings which are neither directly nor indirectly productive; such as,—(20) Manufactures of luxuries and non-essentials; (21) The Navy; (22) The Army; (23) The Stage.—W. T. S. HEWETT, *Notes for Boys*.

12. Very likely you do not agree with the order given some of the professions and occupations in the above list. Make out a list to suit your own notions, and be prepared to explain to the class your reasons for the changes. If you see fit to do so, you may add to the list of occupations and professions, or even adopt another basis for the classification.

13. Make some sort of classification of the students in your school, based on their methods of study, their abilities as shown in the work of the school, their reasons for attending school, the probability of their success in affairs of life and business, or something of that sort. Your classification may be either serious or humorous.

14. Write an explanation of one of the following topics; determine, before you write, the best method of explanation to use:—

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) The Panama Canal. | (3) Municipal control. |
| (2) Our coast defence. | (4) Successful failures. |
| (5) The duty of the voter. | |

15. Write an explanation of one of the following things, using such diagrams and drawings as are necessary to make your explanation clear: (1) a suction pump; (2) a railroad switch; (3) a mail catcher; (4) an ocean current; (5) a torpedo; (6) an equilateral triangle; (7) a chess-board; (8) a rail fence; (9) a lighthouse; (10) the battlefield of Gettysburg; (11) a pulley; (12) a windmill; (13) a canal lock; (14) a suspension bridge; (15) an ice yacht; (16) the phases of the moon; (17) a wheelbarrow; (18) a tile roof; (19) a tuning fork; (20) a pine cone; (21) a buckeye; (22) a street-car transfer; (23) an iceberg; (24) a flowing well; (25) a complex fraction.

16. Study one of the following pictures, and explain its meaning:—

- (1) Michelangelo's "Fates."
- (2) Raphael's "Sistine Madonna."
- (3) Michelangelo's "Delphic Sibyl."
- (4) Breton's "Song of the Lark."
- (5) Correggio's "The Holy Night."
- (6) Corot's "Dance of the Nymphs."
- (7) Burne-Jones's "The Golden Stair."
- (8) Alma-Tadema's "A Reading from Homer."
- (9) Guido Reni's "Aurora."
- (10) Millet's "The Gleaners."

17. Interpret the thought in Rossetti's *Wood-Spurge*:—

The wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill;
I had walked on at the wind's will,—
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was,—
My lips drawn in, said not alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The wood-spurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
 Wisdom or even memory;
 One thing then learnt remains to me,—
 The wood-spurge has a cup of three.

18. Explain the character of one of these types:—

- (1) The tramp.
- (2) The family doctor.
- (3) The travelling agent.
- (4) The professional bargain-hunter.
- (5) The ideal club-member.
- (6) The society leader.
- (7) The person without a sense of humor. .

Add other types to the list.

19. You are getting ready for a party. Explain the preparations.

20. You are to leave in a hurry for Niagara. Tell how you pack your trunk.

21. You are a member of some club. Explain the order of business.

22. You lose a valuable article. Explain how you set about finding it. Longfellow once said, "When looking for anything lost, begin by looking where you think it is not."

23. You are delegated to set the table at a picnic. Explain the process.

24. Write a definition of one of the following terms:—

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) A school diploma. | (7) Good taste. |
| (2) A blunder. | (8) Work and play. |
| (3) A gossip. | (9) Comfort and luxury. |
| (4) A lie. | (10) Informal calls. |
| (5) A politician. | (11) Good reading. |
| (6) A student. | (12) Class loyalty. |

25. Last night a house in your town was broken open, its owner beaten into insensibility, and a large sum of money stolen. Write a paragraph for the editorial page of your town paper, in which you comment on the danger courted by men who, in these days of banks and safe deposit vaults, keep large sums of money in their homes.

26. A great man died yesterday. Go to the library, find out what

you can about his life, and write an editorial on what made his life a success.

27. The town ordinance for —— is not being observed. Write an editorial calling attention to the fact.

28. Another strike has broken out among the anthracite coal miners in Pennsylvania. Write an editorial on the miners' chances of success. Write another on the probable scarcity of coal this coming winter, and the effects of such scarcity upon the poor in large cities.¹

SECTION 80

The Nature of Argument²

If you have ideas of your own, and care to defend them, you will hardly pass a day without

“great argument
About it and about.”

Doubtless you have already had enough arguments over one thing or another to discover that you and your school-fellows sometimes look at things from different points of view. On pretty nearly the same facts you and they sometimes arrive at quite opposite conclusions. You believe, let us suppose, that written examinations are a fair test of scholarship, but your friend, who occasionally

¹ 25-28 may properly be preceded by a study of newspaper editorials. Almost any good newspaper will furnish examples, good and bad, which the class can criticise. For greater convenience, clippings can be made and mounted on cards or heavy paper, which can then be passed about among the members of the class for study.

² Anything like an extended treatment of argument would be out of place in a book like this. The subject, involving, as it does, some knowledge of logic, is peculiarly difficult. Nothing more is attempted here, therefore, than to make a few essential distinctions and to give a few practical hints for debate. The subject is fully treated in books like G. P. Baker's *The Principles of Argumentation*, E. J. MacEwan's *The Essentials of Argumentation*, and R. M. Alden's *The Art of Debate*.

fails to get a high mark in a written test, does not ; you believe that football requires more skill than strength, but your father, who has never played the game, believes that football is nothing more than an exhibition of brute strength ; you believe that the school should provide coaching for all students who wish to play football, but the captain of your school eleven thinks otherwise ; you believe it to be a waste of time to bother about Arbor Day, but your teachers tell you that a day spent in the spring-time of the year in planting trees and in fostering interest in the preservation of our great American forests is a day well spent. Now, skilful argument, although it may seldom enable you to reconcile your opinions with the opinions of people who differ from you, will at any rate enable you to defend your opinions until you are convinced of their falsity or until there is no further occasion for defence. It will at least save you from surrendering your own ideas to those of other people. In this sense argument is like boxing. Training in argument gives a man the same advantage in a contest of words that training in boxing gives in a contest of blows. The green hand always goes down. And there are probably more men who try to bully with words than there are men who try to bully with blows.

It is important, therefore, that you know something about argument. How argument, the art of convincing others of the truth or falsity of some thought or thoughts, differs from explanation has already been stated.¹ Though argument and explanation are distinct in theory, and though argument is always chiefly concerned with the truth or falsity of a thought and explanation is always chiefly concerned with what a thought is — with the mean-

¹ In Section 78.

ing of a thought, the two nevertheless run into each other more or less in practice, precisely as do explanation and description, and description and narration. A clear explanation is often quite as convincing as an argument, and explanation is made use of often enough in argument to expound the meaning of a term or to make clear a portion of the argument itself. "Formally speaking," writes Mr. Bates,¹ "the difference between Exposition [explanation] and Argument is the difference between peace and war. One is a hidden and the other an avowed struggle. In Exposition the writer declares; in Argument he defends. In the former there is no necessary endeavor to convince. The writer concerns himself with setting forth facts, views, or theories; he nominally deals with statements pure and simple. In the latter he attempts to enforce assent to his proposition; to convince is his declared and primary object. Exposition is the teacher; argument, the soldier."

Exercise 94

1. Find in some of your school books an example of a brief argument. Bring the book to the class, and be prepared to state the substance of the argument.

2. Make a list of five or six subjects about which you have recently had an argument. Tell how each argument began, and the name of the person with whom you argued. How did the argument end? Did you convince your opponent? If not, why not? See Exercise 2 for the form of your list.

3. Make a list of three subjects which you think you should like to debate. Be prepared to defend your choice.

¹ In *Talks on Writing English*, chap. xii.

SECTION 81

The Proposition

You cannot go far in argument without knowing the very essential distinction between a term and a proposition, and the reason will soon be apparent. The distinction is this: A term is the name of some idea, as, for example, "golf," "the President of the United States," "examinations"; a proposition, on the contrary, states the relation between two ideas, or makes an assertion in regard to a term or two terms, as, for example, "Golf is a Scottish game," "The President of the United States should hold office for the term of eight years," "Examinations are a fair test of scholarship." In the proposition, "Examinations are a fair test of scholarship," there are two terms, (1) "examinations" and (2) "a fair test of scholarship." Both of these terms are the names of ideas. If these terms stand alone, neither (1) nor (2) can be argued. That is, you can explain what "examinations" are and what "a fair test of scholarship" is, but you cannot argue either term. The reason is to be found in the nature of argument, for argument, you will remember, has been defined as "the art of convincing others of the truth or falsity of some thought or thoughts."¹ Until (1) falls under (2), or until you make some assertion about either (1) or (2), you have no thought, no proposition, and until you have a thought, a proposition, you have nothing that can be argued, nothing whose truth can be disputed.

Though every proposition, I presume, can be argued, and though in life we all now and then have to argue propositions whose truth ought to be perfectly obvious to any

¹ In Section 80.

reasonable human being, not every proposition is suitable for formal debate. Thus, we cannot with any profit to ourselves or others debate the proposition that "Golf is a Scottish game;" if the proposition means that the game of golf had its origin in Scotland, as I fancy it does, it is, for all I know, an indisputable fact.¹ The proposition that "Examinations are a fair test of scholarship," or that "The President of the United States should hold office for eight years," is fairly open to doubt, and, not being objectionable for other reasons, may very profitably be debated.

In stating the proposition for debate you will find it helpful to observe the following rules:—

1. State the proposition in the affirmative.² That is, if the argument is about examinations as a test of scholarship, the proposition should be stated in this fashion: "*Resolved*, That examinations are a fair test of scholarship."³ This form of statement puts "the burden of

¹ Mr. Alden, in his *Art of Debate*, gives the following list of propositions to be avoided, to which I append examples:—

1. Obvious propositions; *e.g.*, "Golf is a Scottish game."
2. Propositions the truth of which depends wholly on the meaning of some ambiguous words or words; *e.g.*, "Walt Whitman was a poet." Here the word "poet" is ambiguous; see Section 82.
3. Propositions the truth or error of which is practically incapable of demonstration; *e.g.*, "The planet Mars is inhabited."
4. Propositions involving more than one main issue; *e.g.*, "The United States government should not have acquired the Philippine Islands, and should now withdraw from them."
5. Propositions devoid of interest to the audience addressed.

² This rule does not always hold good. If, for example, it is intended that the burden of proof shall rest from the start on the negative, the proposition may of course be given a negative form.

³ A proposition, stated for formal debate, generally takes this complete form.

proof" on the affirmative, and leaves "the presumption" in favor of the negative. "He who affirms must prove," runs a rule of law. A man accused of crime is presumed to be innocent. The presumption is in his favor, and, unless his accuser makes out a case against him, he must be acquitted. The burden of proof lies with the accuser to show beyond a reasonable doubt that the man committed the crime of which he is accused. So it is in debate. The affirmative opens and closes the debate, and, if the affirmative is not successful in proving the proposition in debate, the negative wins. If, on the contrary, the affirmative proves the proposition in debate, and if the negative fails to refute the proof presented by the affirmative, then the affirmative wins.

2. State the proposition as briefly as is consistent with exactness. A single unnecessary word in a proposition may divert the argument from the real point at issue. Adjectives especially need watching.

3. State the proposition so as to avoid partiality. If, for example, a proposition were to be stated in this fashion: "*Resolved*, That injudicious examinations should be abolished," the word "injudicious" would at once give the affirmative an unfair advantage over the negative.

4. Use only such terms in the proposition as are intelligible and unmistakable. The terms in a proposition should be understood by both sides in the same sense, for it is a thought that is to be debated — not mere words. If it seems necessary to use a term that is likely to be misunderstood, therefore, the opponents should agree at the outset as to the meaning of the term, and, if the term is very important, they should write out a definition of it and append the definition to the proposition. If the argument

is about trusts, a much debated question nowadays, the definition may begin in this way: "It is agreed that the word 'trust' shall mean 'A combination of financial interests, formed with the intention of creating a monopoly.'"

Exercise 95

1. Point out the terms in the last ten propositions in the list at the close of this chapter.

2. Find and state the proposition in some argumentative essay or speech to which your instructor refers you.

3. State a proposition about each of the following subjects: (1) The discovery of America about 1000 A.D. by the Northmen;¹ (2) the eight-hour day; (3) the navy of the United States; (4) the annexation of Canada to the United States; (5) the high school and athletics.

4. State a proposition about each of the subjects in the list you made for Exercise 94 (3). Test the propositions you draw up for 3 and 4 by the rules in Section 81. Give the complete form to each proposition.

SECTION 82

The Point at Issue

The point at issue is the point about which the whole argument centres. If the point at issue is not stated clearly and distinctly in the proposition, you must search for it until you find it, or the proofs you present may be misdirected. "What does the proposition mean?" "What do the terms mean?" "How did the proposition come to be debated?" "What is the origin of the question?" "How much of what I believe does my opponent admit?" "How much of what my opponent believes do I admit?" "Is my opponent wholly wrong, or only partially

¹See Fiske's *Discovery of America*, i, 148-226, for an interesting argument on this subject.

wrong?" "What ideas, usually connected with the subject, are irrelevant?" "What ideas, really connected with the subject, are most important?" "What ideas, really connected with the subject, are of less importance?" are some of the questions you may ask yourself in your search for the point at issue.

Oddly enough, it sometimes happens that by the time such questions as these are answered and the point at issue is determined, opponents find themselves practically in accord, the argument having started from a mere misunderstanding of terms. Hence it comes that the point at issue so frequently turns on the meaning of some term in the proposition. Take, for instance, the proposition, frequently debated, that Walt Whitman was a poet. Obviously, the point at issue cannot be determined until an agreement is reached as to the sense in which the word "poet" is used. If the word is used in the sense of one who makes verses according to the well-known laws of metre, there is really no point at issue, because it is granted by all that Whitman was not a poet in this sense of the word. If, on the contrary, the word "poet" is used in the sense of one who puts beautiful thought into rhythmic language, half verse and half prose, there is a point at issue that can be debated.

In some cases the determination of the point at issue shows that there is only one decision possible. For instance, take the question, "Was Aaron Burr guilty of treason?" At first thought the question seems equivalent to "Did Aaron Burr commit treason?" but our Constitution¹ states that no person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt

¹ *Constitution of the United States*, article iii, section 3.

act. The point at issue, then, turns on the word "guilty," and the question at once resolves itself to this, "Did Aaron Burr commit an overt act of treason, and were there two witnesses to the same act?" This puts the question in quite another light, and, as two witnesses to the same overt act of treason could not in Burr's case be produced, it becomes evident that Burr was not legally guilty of treason. The determination of the point at issue in this case, therefore, leaves nothing to be argued. However, were the question changed to "Was Aaron Burr morally guilty of treason?" the point at issue would be changed, and there would be a chance for argument.

It is of the utmost importance, then, by careful analysis of the material in a debate, to determine at the start just what the point at issue is in each proposition, and, sweeping aside irrelevant matter of every sort, to make the argument on this point and this point alone. "Side issues" are certain roads to destruction.

Exercise 96

1. Define the terms in two of the propositions in the list at the end of this chapter.
2. Determine the point at issue in each of the two propositions studied for 1. Be sure that you understand the proposition, and know pretty well the proofs on each side of the question, before you attempt to determine the point at issue.

SECTION 83

The Proofs

After you have determined the point at issue, so that your efforts in debate may not be misdirected, you need reasons to prove that the proposition you are debating is

proofs, and, if you can, distinguish the different kinds of arguments. In preparing your lesson, you may find it helpful to draw up an outline or a brief of the argument in each paragraph (see the brief in Section 84):—

MORE ABOUT EARTHWORMS

In the first place 227 withered leaves of various kinds, mostly of English plants, were pulled out of worm-burrows in several places. Of these, 181 had been drawn into the burrows by or near their tips, so that the footstalk projected nearly upright from the mouth of the burrow; 20 had been drawn in by their bases, and in this case the tips projected from the burrows; and 26 had been seized near the middle, so that these had been drawn in transversely and were much crumpled. Therefore 80 per cent (always using the nearest whole number) had been drawn in by the tip, 9 per cent by the base or footstalk, and 11 per cent transversely or by the middle. This alone is almost sufficient to show that chance does not determine the manner in which leaves are dragged into the burrows. — DARWIN, *Vegetable Mould and Earthworms*.

HELPS TO STUDY: Where does the proposition stand in this paragraph,—at the beginning or at the end? Where does it stand in the paragraph quoted in Section 83? Can you think of any reason for the difference? What is the meaning of “induction”? Of “deduction”? Which order is to be preferred for creating suspense? For allaying prejudice? What caution has Darwin shown in drawing his conclusion? Would it be quite honest to draw a larger conclusion from the same observations? What of the number of observations? Were the observations carefully made?

DID THE GREEKS UNDERSTAND ATHLETICS?

Though extraordinary feats were sometimes recorded, I believe that the Greeks did not understand athletics at all so well as the English do. Two facts may be mentioned in proof of this. The runners are said to have started shouting. The boxers, who had their fists weighted with loaded leather gloves, swung round at one another's ears, instead of striking straight home. What we hear about their training seems equally stupid; their trained men are described as generally sleepy, they fed on enormous quantities of

meat, and were obliged to swear that they had spent ten months in training before the games. Good generals, such as Alexander and Philopœmen, discountenanced athletics as producing bad soldiers. But, nevertheless, the combination of art contests with athletics made the Greek meetings finer and more imposing than ours.—MAHAFFY, *Old Greek Life*, 77.

Exercise 98

1. Copy and bring to the class the three paragraphs in George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, chap. vi, beginning with, "‘Ay, but there's this in it, Dowlas,’ said the landlord," etc. Is the reasoning conclusive? Do you sometimes hear talk like this? Write out one such talk, if you can remember the gist of the reasoning, and try to find in some short story or novel another passage illustrating some common error in reasoning.

2. In ancient times physicians sometimes treated a wound by applying an ointment to the weapon that inflicted it. This weapon was dressed carefully and at regular intervals, but the wound was left to take care of itself. Many cures followed upon this treatment. Now, did the cures follow *because* of the treatment? Do you have good luck *because* you find a four-leaved clover, or *because* you hang a horseshoe over your door? Do you have bad luck *because* you do something on a Friday? Does such and such weather follow *because* a ring appears around the moon? Give other examples of this sort of error.

3. Make a list of ten subjects in regard to which you have not observed enough facts to warrant drawing a conclusion. The list in Exercise 12 (1) may be suggestive.

4. What conclusions is it safe to draw from the following statements? (1) The ground is wet. Therefore— (2) Every mistake is not a proof of ignorance. (3) A penny saved is a penny got. (4) A dog's life, hunger and ease.

5. The streets near your school are not kept clean, and a protest, signed by the students, is about to be addressed to the city government. What reasons will it be well to urge?

6. A church is building in your town, and there has been some talk about harmony in church bells. Write an editorial paragraph urging that the bell of the new church be in harmony with the bells of the other churches.

7. You and your friend have had a discussion about the inaccuracy with which news is commonly reported in the papers. Your friend has urged the difficulties under which news is gathered, and you have tried to convince him that his argument is not a sufficient justification. Reproduce the conversation.

8. You are a student at X— Academy. For some weeks you have been studying Latin (or French, or mathematics) with one of your fellow-students, which fact you have casually mentioned in a letter to your father. Your father replies, objecting seriously to this method of study. (1) Write your father's letter. (2) Write your reply, in which you either accept gracefully your father's counsel or attempt to answer his objections. Let this second letter voice your own convictions in the matter.

9. You are of the opinion that certain changes should be made in the course of study in your school. State what these changes are, and give reasons for the changes.

10. The members of your bicycle club are discussing the advisability of petitioning the board of supervisors in your county to provide side-paths for bicyclists along a main-travelled road in your vicinity. Give reasons for or against the advisability of making such a petition.

11. There is a strong sentiment in your town in favor of an ordinance for regulating the speed of automobiles within the town limits. State your own beliefs, and give reasons.

12. You have doubtless decided on some business or profession as your life work. Give reasons for your decision.

13. In the world of work men are seldom at liberty to go on a vacation. Why should not the same rule apply to the getting of an education? Why should you not study the whole year through, including Saturdays?

14. School examinations are sometimes seriously objected to by students, but such examinations, when judiciously conducted, have certain merits. Try to discuss the matter fairly, avoiding mere prejudice.

15. CLASS EXERCISE: Let the class choose from the list at the end of this chapter a half-dozen propositions to be thought about at odd times for a week or so. At the end of the period set for thought ask the class to "take numbers." Then draw from a box containing

the propositions written on separate slips of paper one of the propositions, and read it to the class. After a moment's pause, to admit of thought, draw from another box containing numbered slips a slip with a number on it. Read the number to the class, and ask the student having the same number to make a two minutes' speech on the proposition previously read. If interest in the debate begins to lag, draw another proposition, and have that debated in the same manner. Let each student debate according to his own convictions.

If wholly extemporaneous speeches are wanted, let each student write on a slip of paper some proposition which he is interested in and which he thinks the other students will be interested in. Then choose the proposition to be debated and the speakers in the same way as above. The students should remember, however, that noted speakers seldom or never make wholly extemporaneous speeches. Their speeches are for the most part carefully thought out, if not actually written out. They almost never speak on subjects to which they have not given much thought, sometimes years and years of thought. Webster's *Reply to Hayne*, occasionally cited as an extemporaneous speech, was extemporaneous only in its language. To its matter Webster had given a lifetime of meditation.

SECTION 84

The Brief

A brief is simply a brief outline of an argument. A good brief will show each step in an argument, the main proposition, the subordinate propositions (like I, II, III, and IV below), and the supporting proofs. It is an outlined plan drawn up to test the adequacy of the proofs and to serve as a guide in composing the finished argument.

In drawing up a brief you will find it helpful to adopt the method suggested in Section 9 for the preparation of an outline for an explanatory theme. That is, write your statements and proofs on separate slips of paper, and then

sort them until you are satisfied with their arrangement. A brief, however, is given a form somewhat different from that of an ordinary outline, as the following specimen brief will show : —

THE QUESTION FOR DEBATE

Resolved, That football, as now played, is a beneficial form of school athletics.

BRIEF FOR THE NEGATIVE ¹

Proposition : Football, as now played, is not a beneficial form of athletics, for ²

- I. It is not an essential form of school athletics, for
 1. It does not provide exercise for those students who most need exercise, for
 - a. Such students are not strong enough to play football.
 2. It is not played by a large number of students, for
 - a. The greater number are not qualified physically to play football, for
 - x. The strain on muscles and nerves is excessive.
 - b. Some students who are qualified physically to play football will not play it, for
 - x. Their parents have forbidden them to play.
 - y. They themselves object to the game.
 - c. It is impracticable to provide coaching for all students who can play football, for
 - x. Too much time and money would be required.
 - y. Special training must be given to the first eleven.

¹ When there is an introduction, the main argument is commonly headed "Brief Proper," the three parts of the brief being (1) Introduction, (2) Brief Proper, and (3) Conclusion. In the present case, however, no introduction seems to be needed, since the terms in the proposition are perfectly clear and no other matters need to be explained before the argument itself is begun.

² Note how, by the use of the word *for*, each following statement or proof is made to read as a reason for the preceding one. This device helps to test the adequacy of the proofs.

3. Other forms of athletics are more useful in after life, as¹
 - a. Walking.
 - b. Running.
 - c. Jumping.
 - d. Swimming.
 - e. Boxing.
4. Other forms of athletics are adapted, or can be adapted, to the physical needs of nearly all the students, as
 - a. Field exercises (especially walking, running, etc.).
 - b. Gymnastic exercises.
 - c. Military drill (*i.e.*, such of the drill exercises as do not require the use of guns, and therefore do not involve great expense).
- II. It is not a beneficial form of physical exercise, for
 1. It cannot be adapted to the physical needs even of those students who play it, for
 - a. As few students have the same physical development, exercise that is beneficial to one may be injurious to another.
 - b. In many instances it does not develop those muscles that most need to be developed, for
 - x. It cannot be directed to the development of any one muscle or of any one set of muscles.
 2. Physical injuries are frequent.
 3. Fatalities result more frequently in football than in any other form of school athletics.
- III. It is detrimental to the best scholarship, for
 1. It does not produce that perfect balance between mind and body essential to clear thinking, for
 - a. The exercise is so excessive as to dull the mind.
 2. The time given to training interferes seriously with studies, for
 - a. An immoderate amount of time each day during the football season must be spent in training, for

¹ Note that *for* is not used here. The reason is that the subheadings in this case are explanations or illustrations, and not proofs, of the heading under which they stand.

- x.* This is unsportsmanlike, for
 - (*a*) It frequently results in the game being won by the inferior team.
- b.* These contests are characterized by a spirit of professionalism, for
 - x.* Large crowds gather to witness them.
 - y.* Large sums of money are spent in preparatory arrangements and for admission.

CONCLUSION

Since football, as now played, is not an essential form of school athletics, since it is not a beneficial form of physical exercise, since it is detrimental to the best scholarship, and since it is detrimental to student morals, it is not a beneficial form of school athletics.

Exercise 99

1. **CLASS EXERCISE:** Draw up a brief for the affirmative of the question briefed in Section 84. See again the suggestions in Exercise 19 (1).

2. **CLASS EXERCISE:** Select by vote one of the propositions in Exercise 100, and, after the proposition has been sufficiently studied and read about, draw up two briefs, one for the affirmative and one for the negative.

3. Write out a finished argument from one of the briefs made for 2. Choose the side that you believe in.

4. Select another of the propositions in Exercise 100, read all the articles and books on the question you can find, and draw up a brief for the affirmative or the negative. Submit your brief to your instructor for criticism. Revise or rewrite your brief in accordance with your instructor's criticism, go again over the material you have gathered, and write out the finished argument.

5. Arrange a debate on the proposition stated in Section 84. See Section 85.

SECTION 85

Preparation for Debate

In preparing for debate of any sort, and these remarks apply in part to the written argument, several things should be borne in mind. Choose for debate a question that you are intensely interested in, and debate only that side of it that you believe in. Never, for the sake of mere argument, take a side that you do not sincerely believe to be right. Sincerity is worth more to you than any amount of practice in argument at the sacrifice of truth. The question chosen, examine at the very start the content of your mind; determine how much of your opinion you can prove, and how much of it is mere prejudice and speculation. Study well the question itself, define the terms used in the proposition, find out the point really at issue, and decide upon whom rests the burden of proof. Then sweep aside all matters that are not essential to the argument, including such as are admitted by both sides, and prepare to debate the special issue and nothing else. Remember that if the question is debatable, it must have two fairly plausible sides — learn, therefore, what may be said against your side in order that you may know best what to say for it. Be fair and generous in your debate, and seek not so much to win over your opponent as to convince others of the justice of your cause.

When you have drawn up a carefully prepared brief of your argument, write out the finished argument with as much pains as if you were preparing your manuscript for a first-class publishing house. Having written out the argument, you are at last ready to prepare for the spoken

debate. And at this stage comes the real difficulty of preparation for debate. If you commit your argument word for word, your debate will not have about it that air of extemporization which is so convincing in spoken debate. Whatever you do, therefore, do not memorize your written argument. On the contrary, put your written argument aside, and, with your brief before you as a guide, practise "talking" your debate—just as if you were talking to an audience. At first the thoughts and the words will be slow in coming, and you will probably make some blunders—blunders that would make people laugh at you were they to hear you. But keep talking away until you can talk connectedly and earnestly and convincingly on each point in your debate. Talk in the same fashion on the points you think your opponent may urge on the other side. Thus prepared, nothing that your opponent can say will surprise you into silence. Constant practice in talking to imaginary audiences, and some experience in actual debate, will eventually reward you amply for your efforts.

Exercise 100

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE

1. The high school course should contain fewer studies.
2. American boys should receive military training.
3. To study with another student is detrimental to the best scholarship.
4. Written examinations are a fair test of scholarship.
5. Manual training should be substituted for school athletics.
6. The rules of football should be so revised as to admit of a more open game.
7. The public should not be admitted to the grounds during athletic contests between schools.
8. The reading of dime novels is a mental dissipation.

9. Chemistry (or some other laboratory science) should be a compulsory study throughout the high school course.

10. French (or some other modern language) should be a compulsory study throughout the high school course.

11. Trusts should be effectively controlled by law. (A trust is a combination of financial interests, formed with the intention of creating a monopoly.)

12. Strikes have usually benefited the strikers.

13. The employment of women should be restricted by law.

14. The Isthmian Canal should be fortified and defended by the United States.

15. The United States Navy should be increased until it is the equal of any foreign navy.

16. Postal savings banks should be established by the government.

17. The Nicaragua route should have been chosen by Congress in preference to the Panama route.

18. The United States should have a permanent diplomatic service.

19. The recent war with Spain was justifiable.

20. Cabinet officers should have seats in the House of Representatives.

21. Capital punishment should be abolished.

22. Unanimity should not be required of juries in criminal cases.

23. Lynching is sometimes justifiable.

24. The President of the United States should be elected by direct vote of the people.

25. United States Senators should be elected by direct vote of the people.

26. In municipal elections national party lines should be discarded.

27. As a means of securing municipal reform independent political action is preferable to party action.

28. Reciprocity treaties with other nations should be encouraged for the purpose of increasing American trade.

29. Arbitration between employers and employees should be compulsory.

30. Labor unions, as organized and managed in the United States, are a benefit to the public.

APPENDIX

I. HOW TO PREPARE SCHOOL MANUSCRIPTS

It is next to impossible to handle a large number of school themes without more or less attention to system. The work of correction, burdensome enough in any case, is doubly oppressive when themes are written on all sorts, sizes, and colors of paper, and handed in at the student's own convenience. There is no reason at all why the whole matter should not be conducted on business principles. At the start, therefore, it should be made clear just what the following directions for the preparation of school manuscripts mean, and just why directions of any sort have to be adopted. Thereafter, the observance of the directions should be rigidly enforced. Failure to observe the directions should seriously affect a student's mark. Themes that do not conform to the required directions should be returned unread, and no excuse should be accepted for handing in a theme after the time set for it to be handed in which a reasonable business man would not accept for a breach of punctuality on the part of one of his employees. This method, persisted in, will go a long way toward lightening the instructor's burden of correction; it will also relieve the student from the annoyance of delayed work.

1. *Paper*.¹—Unruled letter paper (about 8×10 or $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$)

¹ These directions refer almost entirely to the final draft of a theme. The preliminary drafts, and the more of these the better, may be written with the pencil on any sort of paper that comes to hand. In writing at white heat, which is the only way one should ever write a first draft, one has no time to think about matters of form. It is only after a theme has been laboriously worked over in the light of preceding lessons, only after it has been made as perfect as it is in one's power to make it, that the directions here given are to be utilized.

inches) is the most suitable for theme work. An unglazed, bond paper is to be preferred to a paper of any sort with a smooth, glossy surface, which is trying to the eyes. In fact, almost any neutral tint of blue, gray, green, or even yellow is less trying to the eyes than white, provided all the students use the same tint and make of paper. Only one side of the sheet should be written on. The ink should be black, the blacker the better.

2. *Margins.* — Along the left-hand side of each page should be left a margin of at least an inch, as straight-edged as may be. At the top of the first page, above the title, an extra wide margin should be left, and, between the title and the first line of the theme, a blank space equal to about the space usually occupied by two lines of writing.¹ The title should be written in the middle of the line, and each noun, adjective, verb, and other important word in the title should begin with a capital letter.² The first word of each paragraph should be indented an inch or an inch and a half. Except at the end of a paragraph, a noticeable blank space at the end of the line should be avoided.

3. *Legibility and Neatness.* — Illegibility is more often the sign of stupidity than of genius. *I*'s should be dotted, therefore, *t*'s crossed, *p*'s and *q*'s minded, and letters likely to be mistaken for one another, such as *a* and *o*, *m* and *w*, *n* and *u*, and so on, should be formed with more than ordinary care.

- Except where it is necessary to use a hyphen, the syllables of a word should be written together (*e.g.*, *neatness* should not be written *neat ness*), and the words themselves should be properly spaced. Flourishes, curlicues, and comet-tailed devices of all sorts are in bad taste. Neatness, too, should go hand in hand with legibility. If corrections have to be made, they should

¹ Compare the margins left by the printer in this book.

² Some would capitalize only nouns and adjectives. It is safe to capitalize all words except prepositions, conjunctions, and articles.

be made neatly. A single horizontal line may be drawn through a word to strike it out, and the caret used for indicating additions.

4. *Folding and Indorsing.*—The theme should be folded once crosswise, the top of the page being brought down to the bottom. Folding the theme crosswise, instead of lengthwise, leaves the pages in better shape for correction, as the crease then runs with the lines of writing, and does not break them all and thus change continually the angle of the lines for the eye that reads them. On the outside of the folded theme, at the inch margin end (see 2 above), with the crease to the right, the student's name, section, and the date when the theme is due should be written: *e.g.*,

James E. Brown

Section 4

September 14, 1903

The fold of the theme will hold the pages in place, without the fastening of them or the turning down of their corners. The pages should be numbered, however, and kept in proper order. For this purpose the student's name and the number of the page may be written in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

5. *Revising and Rewriting.*—Themes should be left at the instructor's desk at the beginning of the recitation at which they are due, and irregularity in handing in or returning themes should seriously affect a student's mark. When a theme is returned to the student with the instructor's comments written in the margins, and a general criticism on the back, the student should revise or rewrite the theme, and return it to the instructor's desk at the beginning of the following recitation. If the word "Rewrite" appears on the back of the theme, the theme should be entirely reconstructed and worked over in accordance with the instructor's sugges-

tions. If the word "Rewrite" does *not* appear on the back of the theme, the theme should be merely revised, the necessary corrections being made on the original manuscript. In any case, the comments of the instructor should be taken as suggestive merely, and other improvements thought of in revising or re-writing a theme, but which may not have been indicated by the instructor, should of course be made. In order that the instructor may estimate the improvement made by the revision, the changes on a revised theme should be made in red ink, and, if the theme has been entirely rewritten, the rewritten theme should be enclosed within the original theme when the latter is returned to the instructor's desk. Revised and rewritten themes should be kept on file by the instructor, and the student should be asked to consult with him now and then regarding the student's progress as shown by his bundle of themes.

6. *Marks Used in Correcting Themes.* — The following marks, not so numerous as to cause confusion, will be found useful in correcting themes: —

Marks in the Margin: —

P Paragraphing faulty.

S Sentence structure faulty.

W Fault in use of words. See Dictionary.¹

a Ambiguous.

c Condense.

e Euphony violated.

f Figure faulty, or uncalled for.

g Bad grammar.

h High-flown, or over-ambitious.

k Awkward, ugly, or unpleasing.

o Obscure.

1, 2, 3, etc. Numerals refer to sections in this book.

| A vertical line against a passage: Recast.

? Questions truth of statement.

¹ Note that the three capital letters, *P*, *S*, and *W*, refer to the three grand divisions of a theme, — the paragraph (Chapter II), the sentence (Chapter III), and words (Chapter IV). The smaller letters, numerals, and signs following refer to more specific faults.

Marks in the Text: The faults referred to by the marginal marks may be indicated in the text by crossing out or by underscoring. A circle around a punctuation mark shows a fault in punctuation. A caret shows where something is to be supplied; an inverted caret shows the omission of a hyphen, an apostrophe, or quotation marks. A check-mark (✓) indicates any obvious fault, and may be used more and more frequently as the student's power to criticize his own work increases. Brackets about a passage indicate that it is to be omitted.

II. HOW TO PUNCTUATE¹

Punctuation marks are used for pretty much the same reason that letters are used. Just as letters, when put together to form words, have certain well defined meanings, so punctuation marks, when used to separate written or printed matter into sentences and parts of sentences, indicate certain well defined grammatical and rhetorical relations. By separating words that do not belong together, and by uniting words that

¹ "The modern system of punctuation was gradually developed after the introduction of printing, primarily through the efforts of Aldus Manutius and his family. In ancient writing the words were at first run together continuously; afterward they were separated by spaces, and sometimes by dots or other marks, which were made to serve some of the purposes of modern punctuation, and were retained in early printing. Long after the use of the present points became established, they were so indiscriminately employed that, if closely followed, they are often a hindrance rather than an aid in reading and understanding the text. There is still much uncertainty and arbitrariness in punctuation, but its chief office is now generally understood to be that of facilitating a clear comprehension of the sense. *Close punctuation*, characterized especially by the use of many commas, was common in English in the eighteenth century, and is the rule in present French usage; but *open punctuation*, characterized by the avoidance of all pointing not clearly required by the construction, now prevails in the best English usage. In some cases, as in certain legal papers, title-pages, etc., punctuation is wholly omitted." — *Century Dictionary*.

do belong together, punctuation marks help the reader to get at the meaning of what is written or printed. To misuse or to omit a punctuation mark, therefore, may render a bit of language ambiguous or even quite unintelligible; to use punctuation marks at random, and without a knowledge of their real significance, is to erect just so many useless fences across the path of the reader.

It is well, then, to know how to punctuate; nor is it very hard to learn how to punctuate. Some knowledge of grammar is needed, and a little sound judgment. The function of each mark is to be kept in mind, — the period, for instance, marks a full stop, and is therefore used to separate one sentence from another; the semicolon and the comma mark off the divisions of a sentence, the semicolon the greater divisions, and the comma the smaller divisions; the colon, formerly used to mark off the greatest divisions of a sentence, is now used mainly as a mark of explanation or specification; and so on, — the chief rules of punctuation, such as those given below, are to be mastered, additional examples of the rules are to be found and copied into note-books, the punctuation of the better sort of modern books and magazines is to be noted, and the facts thus learned are to be put to use in writing. Two practical helps are: —

- (1) Punctuate as you write, and
- (2) Never use a punctuation mark unless you are able to give a reason for it.

1. *The Period (.)*. — The period is used

- (1) To mark the end of a sentence.

NOTE. — An interrogation point, however, is used to mark the end of a direct question, and an exclamation point may be used to mark the end of a sentence strongly exclamatory.

- (2) After most abbreviations; as, Mr., N.Y., M.D., etc.

NOTE. — Certain contractions that have passed into common use, like *Tom* (Thomas), *cab* (cabriolet), and so on, together with a few other abbreviations that may be regarded pretty much as arbitrary signs, such

as @ (at), % (account), ¢/o (care of), & (and), etc., do not take a period, nor do some few abbreviations that retain the last letters of the whole word, as *12mo* (duodecimo), *15th* (fifteenth); so all other ordinal numbers.

2. *The Colon* (:). — The colon is used

(1) Mainly as a mark of explanation or specification; as, "Error is a hardy plant: it flourishes in every soil," "Three properties belong to wisdom: nature, learning, and experience."

NOTE. — The first of these sentences illustrates a special use of the colon, — to show that the second of two clauses in a compound sentence, not connected with the first by a conjunction, repeats in other words the substance of the first, or defines or explains or illustrates it.

(2) To introduce a formal or long quotation, or a list of items.

NOTE. — When the quotation begins a new paragraph, a dash is sometimes placed after the colon. An informal or short quotation is preceded by a comma.

(3) To mark the greatest degree of separation in a sentence; as, "A regular flower, such, for instance, as a geranium or a pink, consists of four or more whorls of leaves, more or less modified: the lowest whorl is the calyx, and the separate leaves of which it is composed, which however are sometimes united into a tube, are called sepals; (2) a second whorl, the corolla, consisting of colored leaves called petals, which, however, like those of the calyx, are often united into a tube; (3) of one or more stamens, consisting of a stalk or filament, and a head or anther, in which the pollen is produced; and (4) a pistil, which is situated in the centre of the flower, and at the base of which is the ovary, containing one or more seeds" (SIR JOHN LUBBOCK).

NOTE. — The use of the colon as a mere mark of separation, midway in strength between period and semicolon, is now rare, the tendency being to recast long, complex passages, in which the colon would formerly have been used, into separate sentences divided and subdivided by semicolon and comma.

3. *The Semicolon (;).*—The semicolon is used

(1) To separate the principal clauses of a compound sentence when the connection is not close (especially when no conjunction is used); as, "His tongue had long obeyed the lilt of classic diction; his thought came easy in Elizabethan phrase," "A skeleton is not a thing of beauty; but it is the thing which, more than any other, makes the body erect and strong."

(2) To separate from one another clauses having a common dependence upon another clause, when commas would not clearly set off each clause in the series; as, "If the poetical prediction, uttered a few years before his [Washington's] birth, be true; if indeed it be designed by Providence that the grandest exhibition of human character and human affairs shall be made on this theatre of the western world; if it be true that

'The first four acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last,'—

how could this imposing, swelling, final scene be appropriately opened, how could its intense interest be adequately sustained, but by the introduction of just such a character as our Washington?" (WEBSTER).

NOTE. — Observe the comma and the dash after the last clause of the series. Phrases similarly constructed and having a common dependence, especially when the series is unusually long and already somewhat subdivided by commas, may be set off by semicolons. For an example see Macaulay's summary of Burke's knowledge of India, in *Warren Hastings*.

(3) To separate short sentences when the connection is too close for the period; as, "The blue sky now turned more softly gray; the great watch-stars shut up their holy eyes; the east began to kindle."

(4) To precede *as*, *viz.*, *e.g.*, *i.e.*, and the like, when introducing examples.

4. *The Comma (,).* — The comma is used

(1) To separate coördinate clauses; as, "The public did not appreciate his speeches, nor did his speeches please the public," "The night had been heavy and lowering, but towards morning it had changed to a slight frost, and the ground and the trees were now covered with rime."

NOTE. — The semicolon is used when the connection is not close. See above, 3 (1).

(2) To mark off a dependent clause that precedes a principal clause; as, "If this be true, I am sorry for it," "Had I a son, I would bequeath him a plough."

NOTE. — The comma is generally omitted when the dependent clause follows; as, "He would pay his debts if he were honest." See above, 3 (2), for the use of the semicolon.

(3) To mark off a relative clause that does not restrict the meaning of its antecedent; as, "The men, who were five in number, skulked along in the shadow of the hedge."

NOTE. — (a) "The engineers that refused to submit were discharged" and (b) "The engineers, who refused to submit, were discharged" are quite different in meaning. In (a) the relative clause, "that refused to submit," restricts the meaning of its antecedent, is indeed absolutely necessary for the understanding of what the antecedent is. In (b), on the contrary, the relative clause does not restrict the meaning of its antecedent; indeed the clause may be dropped entirely as something merely added by way of explanation.

(4) To mark off adverb-phrases not closely connected with the context, especially when they open a sentence; as, "High o'er my head, with threatening hand, the spectre shook his naked brand," "With caution, the hunter crept along."

NOTE. — Adverb-phrases that readily coalesce with the sentence are not set off by commas, the tendency being to omit commas when they are not necessary to clearness; as, "Against my will I obey you," "He spoke with authority," "The strength of one's memory depends to a great extent on one's habits of thought."

(5) To mark off adverbs and adverb-phrases that have a connective force; as, "In all pursuits, then, attention is of prime importance."

NOTE. — So with *therefore*, *however*, *indeed*, *perhaps*, *nevertheless*, *consequently*, etc., also phrases like *in brief*, *in a word*, *no doubt*, *after all*, *of course*, *in fact*, etc.

(6) To mark off words or phrases used in direct address; as, "Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm."

(7) To mark off words or phrases used in apposition; as, "Pontiac, the Indian chief, died in 1769."

NOTE. — No comma is needed, however, when the apposition is scarcely felt as such; as, "Paul the apostle was a man of energy."

(8) To mark off a phrase containing a nominative absolute; as, "Night coming on, we sought refuge from the gathering storm."

(9) To mark off parenthetical elements, when the degree of separation is not such as to require the use of dashes or parentheses; as, "Be diligent, I beseech you, in the pursuit of knowledge."

NOTE. — For the use of dashes and parentheses see below, 7 and 8.

(10) To mark off transposed elements, which have been thrown out of their normal position; as, "Gathers here, after dinner, a crowd of listeners eager for the story-teller's budget."

(11) To separate words or phrases in a series, which stand in the same relation and are not connected by conjunctions; as, "For all was blank, bleak, and gray," "Your friend was wise, prudent, influential," "Days, months, and years have passed since I saw him," "Trees, vines, hedges, shrubs, encircle his house," "Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote."

NOTE 1. — When a conjunction stands between each member of the series, commas are usually not employed. Commas may be used in such cases, however, if the members of the series consist of several words, or if the members are to be separately emphasized. The comma before

and (as in the first sentence quoted above), or before *or* or *nor* in similar situations, should not be omitted, except in very rare cases where the last two members stand in a closer relation than the other members.

NOTE 2. — In a series of adjectives before a noun, commas are used only between adjectives that are coördinate in value ; as, "He is a quiet, sensible young man" [*Quiet* and *sensible* limit *young man*, not *man* alone ; that is, they are coördinate in value], "A dark yellow color."

NOTE 3. — Semicolons are commonly used to separate clauses in a series, unless the clauses are short and simple.

(12) To separate the subject (especially if long or complex) from the predicate when the sentence would otherwise be hard to understand ; as, "Whoso faints, fails," "To hold fast to truth as he sees it, is man's first duty."

NOTE. — Very rarely, a comma may be placed between a verb and its object, and for the same reason ; as, "Most people seem even to think, the more trees, the more birds."

(13) To mark the omission of words ; as, "Homer was the greater genius ; Virgil, [was] the better artist."

(14) To introduce an informal or short quotation ; as, "An old saying runs, 'Great businesses turn on a little pin.'"

(15) In dates, addresses, etc. See the forms in Chapter V.

5. *The Exclamation Point (!)*. — The exclamation point, which is much less subject to rule than other marks of punctuation, should be used very sparingly in ordinary prose. It is used

(1) To express strong emotion ; as, "What a piece of work is man!"

(2) To express sarcasm or doubt ; as, "That man a statesman! He's nothing but a machine politician."

NOTE. — The use of the exclamation point to show irony, the point being inserted in a sentence with parentheses, is vulgar ; as, "Our brilliant (!) contemporary, the editor of the *Stringtown Times*," etc.

(3) After interjections and other exclamatory words ; as, "Oh! how sorry I am!" "Ha, ha, ha! Ye gods! it doth amaze me!" "Ah, I am so glad to see you!" "Peace! Peace! Disturb not his last sleep!"

NOTE.—Not all interjections take the exclamation point, nor does the same interjection take the exclamation point in all cases. *O*, which is used in direct address, takes neither comma nor exclamation point; as, “O blessed Spirit, who hearest prayer!” But exclamatory *oh* (not to be used in direct address), *ah*, *alas*, *lo*, *ha*, *bah*, *pshaw*, and the like, require either a comma or an exclamation point. When the interjection itself is not emphatically exclamatory, it may be followed by a comma, and the exclamation point may be reserved for the end of the sentence, as in the third example under (3). In sentences that are only slightly exclamatory no exclamation point is needed; as, “Oh, I hadn’t heard that.” When an interjection is repeated, as in the second example under (3), the exclamation point may be placed at the end of the group of interjections, in case it is not intended to make each interjection emphatic. When the exclamation point comes in the middle of a sentence, the exclamation point is not followed by a capital.

6. *The Interrogation Point (?)*. — The interrogation point is used

(1) At the end of every direct question; as, “When shall you go?” “That is really true?” [Here the question has the declarative form] “Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?” (*Hamlet*) [Here the point follows each separate query] “It is a significant fact that Pilate’s question — and who has not heard of Pilate’s question? — when put to truth itself, brought him no reply” [Here the point follows the interrogative portion only].

(2) With parentheses to express doubt; as, “Daniel Defoe, born 1661(?), died 1731.”

NOTE.—This does not justify the vulgar use of the interrogation point to show irony; as, “Our worthy(?) friend,” etc.

7. *The Dash (—)*. — The dash is used

(1) To indicate a sudden change in thought or construction; as, “And that hat — what a hat for a ghost to wear!”

(2) To mark off parenthetical expressions, when the degree of separation is too great for commas simply, and not great enough for parentheses.

NOTE. — In case the sentence would require a comma, were there no parentheses, a comma is used before each dash.

(3) After other marks of punctuation, either to strengthen them or to add its peculiar meaning to theirs.

(4) As a mere mark of elocution, to mark pauses, repetitions, hesitation, etc.; as, "Well, m'm, they — er — they told us they had a lantern, and —" "Oh, *shet* up — do!"

(5) To mark the omission of words, letters, and figures; as, "We had now reached the town of —, which was already nearly deserted," "The town of H— was the next to be entered," "Matt. ix, 1-6" [That is, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6].

CAUTION. — Young writers not yet well grounded in punctuation frequently abuse the dash, either by using it where no mark of punctuation is needed or in place of other marks of punctuation. The student, therefore, should try to account for every dash he uses, and, if unable to give some cogent reason for its use, he should change the punctuation.

8. *Parentheses* (). — Parentheses, or curves of parenthesis, are used to enclose explanatory matter that is quite independent of the grammatical structure of the sentence; as, "Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) taught Americans thrift," "John Wilkes was (I state a matter of common knowledge) a man who was willing to sacrifice any principle for the sake of popularity."

9. *Brackets* []. — Brackets are used to enclose matter that is inserted by another person than the original author; as, "One of those who fought in the battle [Braddock's defeat] said, 'I expected every moment to see him [Washington] fall,' — but he was to live for greater work."

10. *The Apostrophe* ('). — The apostrophe is used

(1) As a sign of the genitive or possessive case; as, "the man's hat," "the horses' heads."

(2) To mark the plural of letters, figures, and signs; as, "You make your *w*'s and your *n*'s too much alike," "Be more careful with your 3's and 8's," "What ugly &'s!"

(3) To mark the omission of a letter or letters in contractions; as, *can't* (cannot), *o'clock* (of the clock), etc.

11. *The Hyphen* (-). — The hyphen is used

(1) Between the syllables of a word divided at the end of a line.

NOTE. — Professor Hart (*Handbook of English Composition*, p. 230) offers the following suggestions for word-breaking: —

"1. Never break a monosyllable.

"2. Do not break short dissyllables, such words as *any*, *able*, *upon*, *about*, *master*, *lion*, *real*, *spirit*, *tyro*.

"3. Do not break any word in such a way as to begin the second line with the syllables *-el*, *-er*, *-ic*, *-al*, *-ing*, *-ly*, and the like. Perhaps even *-dom* is undesirable.

"4. Make your breakings etymological, *i.e.*, in accordance with the composition of the word." He also adds the general caution: "If you are in the slightest uncertainty, do not break, but begin the word on the next line."

(2) Between the parts of some compound words; as, *father-in-law*, *twenty-one*, etc.

NOTE. — Here, for the sake of distinction and especially to avoid the confusion that sometimes results when words like *father-in-law* have to be broken at the end of a line, the double hyphen (-) ought really to be used. It is so used throughout the *Standard Dictionary*. Usage varies greatly as to what compound words should take the hyphen. Mr. F. Horace Teall, however, in *English Compound Words and Phrases* and in the *Standard Dictionary* (see pp. xv-xvi), has reduced the matter to some system.

12. *Quotation Marks* (" " and ' '). — Quotation marks are used

(1) To enclose direct quotations.

NOTE 1. — The single marks are used to enclose a quotation within a quotation. The double marks, however, are used to enclose a third quotation standing within the quotation enclosed by the single marks; as, "A child once asked me, 'Sir, what makes people say, "Don't give up the ship"?'"

NOTE 2. — If a quotation stands by itself in a separate paragraph, printed in different type, it is usually not enclosed in quotation marks. The illustrative extracts in this book are examples.

NOTE 3. — If a quotation consists of several paragraphs, and the quotation is continuous, quotation marks are used at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last. But see Note 2, above ; see also the quotation in the note to 11 (1), above.

(2) When italics are not used, to indicate the title of a book, periodical, poem, play, essay, picture, and the like, or the name of a ship.

NOTE. — Observe the practice in this book, and see the note to Section 11, p. 46.

13. *Italics.* — Italics are letters inclined to the right, *like those in which this clause is printed.* In writing, they are indicated by a single line drawn under the letters or words to be italicized. Italics are used

(1) To mark words from a foreign language that are still felt to be foreign, or to quote a brief passage in a foreign language.

(2) To indicate the title of a book, etc., when quotation marks are not used. See 12 (2) and note.

(3) To mark words that are especially emphatic.

NOTE. — Such words, for example, as are spoken of as words, or words and sentences used to illustrate rules, when quotation marks are not used for this purpose. Italics should be used sparingly indeed for the purpose of showing mere emphasis. Emphasis is better got by other means, such, for instance, as those treated of in Chapters III and IV of this book. Where necessary to clearness, or where italics give some desirable effect that cannot otherwise be secured, italics may of course be employed.

14. *Asterisks (***) and Leaders (...).* — Asterisks and leaders are used to mark an omission, the former being usually used for the omission of an entire paragraph or a page or more, and the latter for the omission of words from a sentence or sentences from a paragraph.

15. *General Rules for Capitals.*—The following words should begin with capital letters:—

- (1) The pronoun *I* and the interjection *O*.
- (2) The first word of a sentence, a line of poetry, and a direct quotation (except a mere fragment of a sentence).
- (3) The names and titles of the Deity; as, *the Supreme Being, the Almighty*, etc.

NOTE.—Some commonly capitalize personal pronouns referring to the Deity, but there is now a strong tendency to disregard the custom.

- (4) Proper nouns, and most proper adjectives (*i.e.*, adjectives derived from proper nouns); as, *William Shakspeare, Christian* (from *Christ*), etc.

NOTE 1.—Here may be mentioned the names of persons, places (including streets, rivers, mountains, etc.), countries, parts of the country (*the North, the great Northwest*; but *A gale is coming from the northwest*), the days, the months (but not the seasons), special days (*Christmas*, etc.), and weeks (*Easter Week*, etc.), ships, races, religious sects, political parties, fraternities and organizations generally, etc., etc.

NOTE 2.—Observe that the words *river, street, mountain*, etc., when they form a part of the proper name, are capitalized; as, *Missouri River, Market Street*, etc.

NOTE 3.—When an adjective derived from a proper noun ceases to be thought of in connection with that noun, it sometimes loses its capital letter; as, *herculean, stoical, stentorian, epicurean, quizzotic*, and the like.

- (5) Titles of honor or office, when used with the name, or when equivalent to a proper name; as, *President Roosevelt, The Attorney-General of the United States*, etc.

NOTE.—For titles of books, etc., see the rule regarding the titles of themes, p. 348.

- (6) Names of things *strongly* personified.
- (7) Any words of very great importance; as, *Magna Charta, the Reformation, the Civil War, the Glacial Epoch*, etc.

INDEX

[THE REFERENCES BELOW ARE TO PAGES.]

- Abbott, E. A., 137.
 Abbreviations of months, 211.
 Accuracy in use of words, 180-183.
 See under Correctness, Precision.
 Action in stories. *See under* Movement.
 Adaptation to the reader, 8-11, 232-234. *See* Preface, *passim*.
 Addition of details, for study of effects, 29, 30.
 Address, of a letter, 212-213, 217, 228-229, 230, 233; of a postal card, 222.
 Adjectives, study of. *See* Helps to Study, *passim*; *also under* Words.
 Adverbs, adverbial phrases to suspend thought, 156; position of, 138-139.
 Advertisements, 224-228.
 Æsop, 32.
 Alden, R. M., 329.
 Ambiguity. *See under* Clearness, Effectiveness, Precision.
 American and British words, 172-173.
American Monthly Review of Reviews, 319-320.
And and *but*, use of, 114-115.
 André, Major, 185-186.
 Anecdote, successive reappearances of, 93-94; defined, 263; specimen of, 49. *See* Narration, *passim*.
 "Angelus," study of Millet's, 105-106.
 Antecedent and pronoun, 137-138.
 Anticlimax, 159.
 Antithesis, 158-159, 160. *See under* Contrast.
 Apostrophe, rules for sign of, 359-360.
 Applications, 224-228.
 Archaisms, 168-171,
 Argument, 325-346; distinguished, 207-208, 312-313, 326-327; nature of, 325-327; books about, 325; the proposition in, 328-331; point at issue in, 331-333; proofs in, 333-339; brief in, 339-343; preparation for debate, 344-345; propositions for debate, 345-346.
 Arnold, Matthew, 198.
 Arrangement of material, 33-41; in letters, 233; in narration, 247-248; in description, 278, 282, 284-288; in explanation, 316; in argument, 339-343. *See under* Material.
 Arrangement of the paragraph, to secure mass, 110-113; to secure coherence, 113-116; to bind paragraphs together, 116-120.
 Arrangement of parts of the sentence, to secure mass and emphasis, 140-141; to secure coherence, 141-142; to secure periodic structure, 153-157; to secure balanced and parallel structure, 157-161. *See under* Antithesis, Balance, Climax, Mass, Parallel, Periodic.
 Article, use of, 138.
 Association of ideas, 69.
 Associations of words, 185-186, 189-191.
 Asterisks, use of, 361.
 Atmosphere in stories, 261.
 Audience, adaptation to, 8-11, 232-234.
 See Preface, A Word at the Start, *passim*.
 Austen, Jane, 243-245.
 Authors. *See under* Literature, Poetry, Reading.

- Bacheller, Irving, 55-56.
 Bacon, Lord, 23, 157.
 Bain, Alexander, 114, 155. *Also see* Preface.
 Balanced structure in sentences, 157-161.
 Baldwin, C. S., 290.
 Bates, Arlo, 249, 327.
 Beard, D. C., 24-25, 317-318.
 Beard, L. and A. B., 318-319.
 Beecher, Henry Ward, 98.
 Beginning of a story, 261-263.
 Betterton, Thomas, 154.
 Bible, Ruskin's list of chapters, 55; 38, 144-145, 195, 200.
 Big and little words, 187-193.
 Binding paragraphs together, 116-120. *See under* Coherence.
 Blouet, Paul (Max O'Rell), 54-55, 73.
 Body of a letter, 214.
 Brackets, rules for, 359.
 Brevity in sentences, 138, 140. *See under* Effectiveness, Emphasis, Vigor, Words.
 Brief in argument, 330-343; specimen brief, 340-343.
 British and American words, 172-173.
 Brown, M. W., 63.
 Browning, Robert, 198.
 Buchanan, Robert, 198.
 Buck, G., 197.
 Buck, G., and Woodbridge, E., 285-286.
 Bunner, H. C., 73.
 Burbage, 154.
 Burke, Edmund, 22, 78, 120.
 Burroughs, John, 102, 296.
 Business letters, 218-222.
 Business transactions. *See* Letter-Writing, *passim*.
But and *and*, use of, 114-115.
 Byron, Lord, 199.
 Cable, George W., 301.
 Campbell, George, 195.
 Capitals, rules for, 362; in title of theme, 348.
 Card, visiting, 227.
 Caricature, study of, 56-57.
 Carlyle, Thomas, 199.
 Carpenter, G. R., 227, 248-249.
 Carter, W. S., 227.
 Caudle, Mrs. *See under* Jerrold.
 Central thought in description, 296-301.
 Century Dictionary, 76, 351.
 Change of structure in sentences. *See under* Variety.
 Characters in narration, 242, 245, 248, 256-257; some common types of, 324.
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 169, 171.
 Choice of material. *See under* Selection.
 Choice of subject, 3-5. *See under* Subject.
 Choice of words. *See under* Words.
 Chronological order, 33-41, *passim*, 247-248, 252-253.
 Churchill, Winston, 50, 72.
 Class exercises, 35, 38-39, 43-45, 90, 109, 120, 150, 254, 257, 258, 260, 262, 287, 310, 338-339, 343.
 Clauses, subordination of, 150; for suspending thought, 155-156.
 Clearness, rules for, 137-139; of sentence, 136-139; in explanation, 316-317.
 Clemens, Samuel Langhorne (Mark Twain), 299.
 Climax, 159, 161.
 Close of a letter. *See under* Conclusion.
 Coherence, of paragraph, 113-116; of sentence, 141-142.
 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, edition of *Ancient Mariner*, 44; 137, 153, 288.
 Colon, rules for, 353.
 Color in description, 310 (24); specimen of, 296.
 Comma, rules for, 355-357.
 Comparison, construction of paragraph by, 82-84, 85-93.
 Complex sentences, 145-151.
 Complication of plot, 252-253.
 Composition, value of, A Word at the Start, *passim*. *See under* Oral, Whole composition.
 Compound sentences, 145-151.
 Compound words, references for, 300.

- Concluding paragraphs, 126-128.
- Conclusion, in explanation, 127-128; in narration, 262; of a letter, 214-216.
- Conditional clauses to suspend thought, 155.
- Conjunctions, use of coördinate, 139.
- Connectives, used in contrast, 85; in paragraphs, 113-116; in sentences, 142; between paragraphs, 116-120; list of, 114-115.
- Connotation of words, 185-186.
- Construction of paragraphs, 67-106; methods enumerated, 69; psychology of, 69; by definition, 70-77; by reversion, 77-82; by comparison, 82-84, 85-93; by contrast, 84-93; by example, 93-100; by restatement, 100-106.
- Contrast, construction of paragraphs by, 84-93. *See under* Antithesis.
- Conversation in stories, 265-269; paragraphing of, 55-56.
- Cook, A. S., 55.
- Correction of school manuscripts, marks used in, 350-351. *See* Preface, *passim*.
- Correctness of sentence, 134-135. *See under* Precision.
- Correspondence. *See under* Letter-Writing.
- Cowper, William, 200.
- Cox, S. S., 70.
- Creative faculty, development of. *See* Preface, *passim*.
- Critical faculty, development of. *See* Preface, *passim*.
- Criticism, exercises in literary, 319-321; of school manuscripts, Preface, *passim*, 349-351.
- Curtis, George William, 72.
- Darwin, Charles, 334-335, 336.
- Dash, rules for, 358-359.
- Date of a letter, 211-212, 230.
- Debate, preparation for, 344-345; propositions for, 345-346; exercises in, 338-339. *See under* Argument.
- Declarative sentences, 143-145.
- Definition, construction of paragraphs by, 70-77; inaccuracy in, 75.
- De Quincey, Thomas, 125.
- Derivation of words, 171-172; study in, 183. *See under* Synonyms.
- Description, 275-311; distinguished, 207-208; in situations in narration, 258; specimens of, 275-311, *passim*; list of specimens of, 281; nature of, 282-284; two kinds of, 282-283: perception by sight, 284-288; difficulties of, 288-289; point of view in, 290-292; point of time in, 292-295; central thought in, 296-301; rapid suggestion in, 301-303; value of specific in, 303-304; sensations other than of sight in, 304-307; exercises in, 307-311.
- Descriptive words, 276, 277, 303-304.
- Details, taking notes of, 11-14; gathering, 26-27; selecting, 29-33; arranging, 33-41; lists of, 32-33. *See* Helps to Study, *passim*; and under Arrangement of material, Material.
- Diagrams, in explanation, 317; of plots, 254.
- Dialect in stories, 270 (9).
- Dialogue. *See under* Conversation.
- Dickens, Charles, 142, 267, 267-268, 283, 298-299, 300, 302, 306.
- Dictionaries, compared, 76; as records of good usage, 168.
- Dictionary, use of, 21, 70, 71, 75-76, 322-324, *passim*. *See* Helps to Study, *passim*.
- Direction of a letter. *See under* Address.
- Don'ts of letter-writing, 236.
- Dooley, Mr. *See under* Dunne.
- Draft, writing of first draft of theme, 41-44, 131-132, 151, 156, 161, 164, 347. *See* Preface, *passim*.
- Drawings in explanation, 317.
- Du Maurier, George, 306-307.
- Dunne, P. F. (Mr. Dooley), 81.
- Ease, assisted by coherence. *See under* Coherence.

- Echo, paragraph, 117-118. *See under* Binding, Coherence.
- Edgeworth, Maria, 175.
- Edwards, Jonathan, 12.
- Effectiveness, rules for, 139-141; of sentence, 139-141; devices for, 141. *See under* Antithesis, Climax, Emphasis, Mass, Vigor.
- Effect, description by, 309.
- Effects in description, 276, 277, 278, 283, 293, 297, 298-300, 301, 303, 305-307, 309.
- Elegance in the use of words, 201-203.
- Elements of narration, 248-249.
- Eliot, George, 147, 252-253, 302, 337.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 20, 22, 84-85, 146, 200.
- Emphasis in paragraphs, sentences, and words. *See under* Effectiveness, Mass, Vigor.
- Ending a story, 261-263.
- Engineering, explanation in, 317.
- English Dictionary, The New, 76.
- English language, standards of, 167-180, *passim*; obsolete words in, 168-171; foreign words in, 171-172; localisms in, 172-176; disreputable words in, 177-180; American usage the standard of, 173.
- Enumeration in description, 282-283, 296-297.
- Envelope, superscription on, 217-218; putting folded letter into, 218.
- Essay. *See under* Arrangement, Composition, Explanation, Outline, Theme, Whole composition.
- Essentials of the paragraph, 106-116; unity of paragraph, 106-110; mass of paragraph, 110-113; coherence of paragraph, 113-116.
- Essentials of the sentence, 134-143; correctness of sentence, 134-135; clearness of sentence, 136-139; effectiveness of sentence, 139-141; coherence of sentence, 141-142; unity of sentence, 142-143.
- Example, construction of paragraphs by, 93-100.
- Exclamation point, rules for, 357-358.
- Exclamatory sentences, 143-145.
- Experiences, one's own, as subject, 3-5, 6-7. *See* Preface, A Word at the Start, *passim*.
- Explanation, 312-325; as basis of Chapters II and III, 69; distinguished, 207-208, 312-313, 326-327; nature of, 312-315; methods of, 70-106, 315-317; exercises in, 317-325; by definition, 70-77; by reversion, 77-82; by comparison, 82-84, 85-93; by contrast, 84-93; by example, 93-100; by restatement, 100-106.
- Exposition. *See under* Explanation.
- Expressiveness. *See under* Effectiveness, Vigor.
- Fables, moral in, 263; specimen of, 32. *See under* Æsop.
- Fairy tales, plausibility in, 254; list of books, 254.
- Familiar letters. *See under* Friendly.
- Familiar words, 189-191.
- Fiction, reality in, 86-87. *See under* Narration.
- Figurative and literal words, 196-201.
- Figures of rhetoric, 197-201; test of, 197; references on, 197-198; similes, 198; metaphors, 198-199; faults of, 200-201.
- First draft of theme, writing of, 41-44, 131-132, 151, 156, 161, 164, 347. *See* Preface, *passim*.
- First person in narration, 264-265.
- Flaubert, Gustave, 18, 181.
- Fletcher, J. B., 248-249.
- Flynt, J., 177.
- Folding a letter, 218; school manuscripts, 349.
- Force. *See under* Effectiveness, Mass, Vigor.
- Foreign words in English, 171-172.
- Forms of discourse. *See* Part III.
- Franklin, Benjamin, 28-29, 33, 38, 84-85, 146, 160, 248, 359.
- Friendly letters, 232-235.
- Garland, Hamlin, 275-276, 279-281.

- Gathering material, 16-27. *See under* Material.
- Gayley, C. M., and Scott, F. N., 198.
- General and specific words, 193-196.
- Gibbon, Edward, 91.
- Good usage in words, 167-180. *See under* Usage.
- Gore, W. C., 177.
- Grammar, suggestions for review, 135, Preface, *passim*; and sentence structure, 133-135; as record of good usage, 168. *See under* Correctness.
- Grant, U. S., 112.
- Hart, J. M., 360.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 13, 117, 117-118, 120-122, 165, 199, 261.
- Heading of a letter, 211-212.
- Hearing in descriptions, 305-306.
- Hearn, Lafcadio, 278-279.
- Helps to Study, 21, 29, 56-57, 59, 61-62, 77, 105, 106, 122, 241-242, 245, 246-247, 276, 277, 278, 336.
- Hewett, W. T. S., 322.
- Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 16.
- Holmes, G. C. V., 68-69.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 64-65, 87, 92, 177-178, 198.
- Hubbard, Elbert, 62-63.
- Hugo, Victor, 91, 125.
- Hundred Anecdotes of Animals, 49.
- Huntington, T. F., edition of *Ancient Mariner*, 44.
- Huxley, Thomas H., 87-88.
- Hypen, rules for, 360.
- Ideas, association of, 69.
- Idioms and slang, 178-179.
- Imitation in writing stories, 269.
- Imperative sentences, 143-145.
- Implication of words, 185-186, 189-191.
- Impressions in description. *See under* Effects.
- Incidents, order of, 247-248. *See under* Arrangement.
- Indentation, of paragraph, 52, 53-56; of speeches in stories, 55-56; in school manuscripts, 348.
- Individuality, development of student's. *See* Preface and A Word at the Start, *passim*.
- Indorsing school manuscripts, 349.
- Infinitive, split (or cleft), 135.
- Instances. *See under* Example.
- Interrelation of paragraphs in the theme. *See under* Binding.
- Interrogation point, rules for, 358.
- Interrogative sentences, 143-145.
- Introduction, function of, 126-128; study of, 128; part of letter, 212-213; in stories, 257-258, 261-263; in description, 289; in explanation, 126-127; in brief (argument), 340.
- Introduction, letter of, 226.
- Introductory paragraphs, 126-128.
- Inverted order, 140-141.
- Invitations and replies, 230-232.
- Irving, Henry, 152, 154.
- Irving, Washington, 56, 261, 276-277, 302.
- Issue, point at (argument), 331-333.
- Italics, rules for, 361.
- Jerrold, D. W., 145.
- Johnson, Samuel, 111-112, 159-160, 291-292.
- Johnston, Mary, 80.
- Junction, of paragraphs, 116-120; of sentences, 113-116; of parts of sentence, 141-142. *See under* Binding, Coherence.
- Keats, John, 199, 200, 307.
- Kinds of sentences, 143-157.
- Kinds of writing, the four, 207-208. *See under* Narration, Description, Explanation, and Argument.
- Kipling, Rudyard, 61, 91, 198, 245-246, 301, 319-320.
- Koopman, H. L., 26.
- Ladd, G. T., 83, 285.
- Landor, Walter Savage, 91.
- Language. *See under* English.
- Law, technical words in, 174.
- Leaders, use of, 361.
- Legibility in school manuscripts, 348-349.

- Length, of paragraphs, 122, 123-125; of sentences, 161-165.
- Lessing, G. E., 289.
- Letter heads engraved for professional use, 227.
- Letter, parts of, 210-217; heading, 211-212; introduction, 212-213; body, 214; conclusion, 214-216; superscription, 217; folding, 218.
- Letter-Writing, 209-237; importance of, 209-210; parts of a letter, 210-217; folding a letter, 218; business letters, 218-222; postal cards and telegrams, 222-224; advertisements and applications, 224-228; official letters, 228-229; invitations and replies, 230-232; friendly letters, 232-235; some don'ts, 236; importance to literature, 237; exercises in, 81, 338.
- Limiting a subject, 5-8. *See under* Subject.
- Lincoln, Abraham, 21, 50, 57-59, 72, 128, 147, 155, 187, 196, 207.
- Literary criticism, exercises in, 319-321.
- Literature and the letter form, 237.
- Little and big words, 187-193.
- Liveliness in explanation, 317. *See under* Effectiveness, Variety, Vigor.
- Localisms, 173-174, 175-176. *See under* Usage, Words.
- Longfellow, H. W., 200, 324.
- Loose sentences, 152-157.
- Lowell, J. R., 191-192, 200.
- Lubbock, Sir John, 353.
- McCarthy, Justin H., 125.
- Macaulay, Lord, 111-112, 117, 148-150, 157-158, 158, 172, 354.
- Mahabharata, 200.
- Mahaffy, J. P., 336-337.
- Major, Charles, 53.
- Manuscripts, preparation of school, 347-351.
- Margins in school manuscripts, 348.
- Marks used in correcting school manuscripts, 350-351.
- Mass, of paragraph, 110-113; of sentence, 140.
- Material, how to gather, 16-27; gathering by seeing, 16-19; gathering by reading, 21-26; gathering by thinking, 26-27; how to select, 29-33; how to arrange, 33-41. *See under* Arrangement.
- Matsell, G. W., 177.
- Matthews, Brander, 84-85, 93-94, 299-300, 305-306.
- Maupassant, Guy de, 18.
- Memory not to be depended on, 11-12.
- Metaphors, 200-201.
- Methods of explanation, 315-317.
- Microscope, study with, 90.
- Miller, C. H. (Joaquin), 85-86.
- Millet, J. F., study of "Angelus," 105-106.
- Mixed metaphor, 200.
- Modern usage. *See under* Present.
- Modifiers, placing of, 138-139.
- Monotony, avoidance of. *See under* Effectiveness, Liveliness, Variety, Vigor.
- Morley, John, 157.
- Mother Goose, 34, 251, 252.
- Movement in stories, 258-261.
- Narration, 238-274; distinguished, 207-208; characters in, 242, 245, 256-257; nature of, 247-248; elements of, 248-249; purpose in, 249-251; plot in, 251-256; situation in, 257-258; movement in, 258-261; beginning and ending a story, 261-263; point of view in, 263-265; conversation in, 265-269; exercises in, 247, 269-274; specimens of, 238-274, *passim*; list of specimens of, 247.
- Narrator, point of view of, 263-265.
- National usage in words, 171-176.
- Native and foreign words, 171-172.
- Nature, of narration, 247-248; of description, 282-284; of explanation, 312-315; of argument, 325-327.
- Nature study, 98.
- Neatness in school manuscripts, 348-349.

- New English Dictionary, The, 76.
 Newman, John Henry Cardinal, 74-75, 91.
 Newspaper, American, 108-109.
 Newspaper English, 191-192.
 Normal order and emphasis, 140-141.
 Northrop, B. G., 151.
 Note-books. *See under* Notes.
 Notes, how to take, 11-16; of thoughts, 11-13, 27; kinds of, 14; in note-books, 14, 16; of lessons, 14-15; of a speech, 15-16; of articles read, 24-25; specimens of, 13, 15, 15-16, 24-25.
 Nouns. *See* Helps to Study, *passim*.
 Observation of details, 16-19, 284-288.
 Obsolete meanings and words, 168-171.
 Odor in descriptions, 306-307.
 Official letters, 228-229.
 Omission of details, for study of effects, 29, 59, 242.
 Only, place of, 139.
 Oral composition, exercises in, 5, 10, 18-19, 20-21, 28-29, 32, 46-47, 49-50, 54-55, 56-57, 59, 61-62, 64-66, 66-67, 71-75, 77, 79-81, 85-89, 90-91, 94-98, 99, 102-105, 119, 120, 120-122, 125, 128, 148-150, 155, 159-160, 164, 175-176, 180, 187-188, 196, 198-201, 238-247, 250-251, 254-255, 258, 260, 262-263, 265, 269-274, *passim*, 275-281, 288, 291-292, 293-295, 300-301, 304, 307-311, *passim*, 317-325, *passim*, 327, 331, 333, 335-339, *passim*, 343.
 Order. *See under* Arrangement.
 Order of time. *See under* Time.
 O'Rell, Max. *See under* Blouet.
 Origin of words, 171-172; study of, 183.
 Outline, how to prepare, 33-41; on cards, 35. *See under* Brief.
 Outlines, specimens of, 36-37, 45, 105; specimen brief, 340-343.
 Outlook, The, 319.
 Pages of a letter, order of, 214.
 Painting and description, 289, 310. *See under* Picture.
 Paper for letters, 218, 227, 236; for school manuscripts, 347-348.
 Paragraph, the, 51-128; advantages of, in work of school, 51-52, 131-132, Preface; defined, 51-52; distinguished from whole composition, 51; distinguished from sentence, 131-132; indentation of, 52, 53-56; subject of, 56-57; subject-sentence of, 59-67; construction of, 67-105; 131-132; indentation of, 52, 53-56; subject of, 56-57; subject-sentence of, 59-67; construction of, 67-105; methods of construction enumerated, 69; psychology of construction, 69; construction by definition, 70-77; construction by reversion, 77-82; construction by comparison, 82-84, 85-93; construction by contrast, 84-93; construction by example, 93-100; construction by restatement, 100-106; essentials of, 106-116; unity of, 106-110; mass of, 110-113; coherence of, 113-116; binding paragraphs together, 116-120; length of, 122, 123-125; introductory and concluding paragraphs, 126-128.
 Parallel structure in sentences, 157-161.
 Parentheses, rules for, 359.
 Parkman, Francis, 91.
 Participle, connection of, 138.
 Participial phrases to suspend thought, 156.
 Parts of a letter, 210-217.
 Pater, Walter, 181, 302, 303.
 Perception by sight, 284-288.
 Period, rules for, 352-353.
 Periodic sentences, 152-157.
 Persons, descriptions of, 28, 50, 56, 170, 283, 300, 302, 306.
 Perspicuity. *See under* Clearness.
 Picture study, 105-106, 310, 323.
 Planning, writing, and rewriting, 131-132. *See* Preface.
 Plausibility, a test of narration, 254.
 Plot in narration, 248, 251-256.
 Poe, Edgar Allan, 257, 261, 278.
 Poems, lists of, 21, 44, 48-49, 251, 255. *See under* Selections.
 Poetical words in prose, 169.

- Poetry, study of, 21, 77, 170; words in present use in, 169. *See under* Selections.
- Point at issue, 331-333.
- Point of time in description, 292-295.
- Point of view in narration, 263-265; in description, 290-292.
- Pope, Alexander, 179, 198.
- Position of modifiers, 138-139; of *only*, 139.
- Position of words, etc., for clearness, 138-139; for effectiveness, 140-141; inversion, 140-141; for coherence, 142. *See under* Antithesis, Climax, Effectiveness, Parallel structure, Periodic.
- Postal cards, 222-224.
- Precision in the use of words, 180-183. *See under* Specific.
- Present usage in words, 168-171.
- Pronoun and antecedent, 137-138.
- Proofs in argument, 333-339.
- Proposition in argument, 328-331.
- Propositions for debate, 345-346.
- Prose extracts, study of. *See under* Helps to Study.
- Proverb, 32.
- Provincialisms, 171-176, *passim*.
- Psychology of comparison, 83; of paragraph construction, 69; of sight (in description), 284-288.
- Purpose in narration, 248, 249-251.
- Punctuation, 351-362; in letters, 213, Letter-Writing, *passim*; origin of, 351; reason for, 351-352; how to learn, 352; rules for period, 352-353; rules for colon, 353; rules for semicolon, 354; rules for comma, 355-357; rules for exclamation point, 357-358; rules for interrogation point, 358; rules for dash, 358-359; rules for parentheses, 359; rules for brackets, 359; rules for apostrophe, 359-360; rules for hyphen, 360; rules for quotation marks, 360-361; rules for italics, 361; use of asterisks and leaders, 361; rules for capitals, 362.
- Question mark, rules for, 358.
- Quotation marks, rules for, 360-361.
- Rabelais, François, 199.
- Rapid suggestion in description, 301-303.
- Reading, of a poem, 21; directions for, 21-23; taking notes of, 24-25; gathering material by, 21-26; lists for, 21, 24, 44, 48-49, 55, 59, 81, 91, 180, 237, 242, 251, 254, 255, 257, 258, 271.
- Recommendation, letter of, 225-226.
- Redundancy, 185.
- References, how to find and make, 25-26.
- Repetition. *See under* Restatement.
- Replies to invitations, 230-232.
- Reports of speeches, etc., 15-16.
- Reputable usage in words, 177-180.
- Resemblance. *See under* Comparison.
- Restatement, construction of paragraphs by, 100-106.
- Reversion, construction of paragraphs by, 77-82.
- Reviews of books, 319-320.
- Revision, work of, 42; of school manuscripts, 349-350. *See under* Rewriting.
- Rewriting, work of, 42-44, 131-132, 151, 156, 161, 164; of school manuscripts, 349-350. *See* Preface, *passim*.
- Rhetoric, as record of good usage, 168. *See under* Composition.
- Riis, Jacob, 319.
- Rossetti, D. G., 323-324.
- Ruskin, John, 55, 76-77, 79, 86, 88-90, 96-97, 157.
- Salutation in a letter, 212-213.
- Samuels, 296.
- Scene in stories. *See under* Situation.
- Schoenhoff, U. S. consul, 95-96.
- School manuscripts, how to prepare, 347-351; need of system, 347; paper, 347-348; margins, 348; legibility and neatness, 348-349; folding and indorsing, 349; revising

- and rewriting, 347-350; marks used in correcting, 350-351; how to criticize, Preface.
- Scientific description, 296.
- Scott, Walter, 12, 86-87.
- Sculpture and description, 289.
- Seeing, rules for, 17-18; power of seeing tested, 18-19; gathering material by, 16-19; perception by sight explained, 284-288.
- Selecting material, 29-33; in description, 296-297. *See under* Material.
- Selections, poetry, 20, 34, 44, 76-77, 170, 194, 198-199, 200-201, 293-295, 298, 307, 323-324.
- Semicolon, rules for, 354.
- Sensations other than of sight in description, 304-307.
- Sense-impressions in description. *See under* Effects.
- Sentence, subject-sentence, 59-67.
- Sentence, the, 133-166; distinguished from paragraph, 131-132; defined, 133-134; and grammar, 133-134; essentials of, 134-143; correctness of, 134-135; clearness of, 136-139; effectiveness of, 139-141; coherence of, 141-142; unity of, 142-143; kinds of, 143-157; declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences, 143-145; simple, complex, and compound sentences, 145-151; loose and periodic sentences, 152-157; balanced and parallel structures, 157-161; length of, 161-165; variety in, 166.
- Sequence of thought. *See under* Coherence.
- Setting of stories. *See under* Situation.
- Shakspere, 31, 154, 159, 169, 198, 199, 200, 298.
- Sherman, L. A., 119, 162.
- Sherman, W. T., 83.
- Sight, perception by, 284-288; sensations other than of, 304-307. *See under* Seeing.
- Signature in a letter, 215-216.
- Silence in descriptions, 305.
- Similarity. *See under* Comparison.
- Similarity in sentence structure, 142.
- Similes and metaphors, 200-201.
- Simple sentences, 145-151.
- Simplicity in style, 187-193.
- Situation in narration, 248, 257-258.
- Slang, 177-180; references on, 177. *See under* Reputable.
- Sinell in descriptions, 306-307.
- Smith, Adam, 94-95.
- Smith, F. Hopkinson, 309.
- Smith, Goldwin, 86-87.
- Smoothness, aided by coherence and transition. *See under* Coherence.
- Social instincts, development of student's. *See* Preface, A Word at the Start, *passim*.
- Sound in descriptions, 305-306.
- Southey, Robert, 198.
- Specific and general words, 193-196; in description, 303-304. *See* Helps to Study, *passim*.
- Specific, value of, in description, 303-304.
- Spectator, The*, 38, 59.
- Speech-making, hints on, 15-16; exercises in, 338-339.
- Spencer, Edward, 189-190.
- Spenser, Edmund, 170.
- Split infinitive, 135.
- Standard Dictionary, 76, 360.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, 12, 65-66, 83, 238-241, 242, 255-256, 259, 302.
- Stories, movement in, 258-261; beginning and ending a story, 261-263; conversation in, 265-269. *See under* Narration.
- Story-teller, how to become a, 16.
- Style and the Bible, 55.
- Subject of a composition, 3-11; choosing a subject, 3-5; limiting a subject, 5-8; wording a subject, 8-11; of a paragraph, 56-57.
- Subject-sentence of a paragraph, 59-67.
- Subordinate clauses to suspend thought, 155.
- Subordination of clauses, 150. *See under* Complex sentences.
- Suggestion in description, 301-303; in words, 185-186, 189-190.

- Summary of a narrative, 255-256.
 Superscription of a letter, 217.
 Suspended sentences. *See under* Periodic.
 Suspending thought, devices for, 155-156.
 Suspense in narration, 259-261.
 Sweet, Henry, 133.
 Synonyms, 180-183; exercises in, 181-182. *See under* Words.
 Tait, P. G., 65.
 Taking notes, 11-16. *See under* Notes.
 Taste in descriptions, 307.
 Teall, F. H., 360.
 Technical words, 174, 175-176.
 Telegrams, 222-224.
 Tennyson, Lord, 194, 293-295.
 Term in argument, 328-331.
 Test questions, for choosing subject, 3, 7-8; for power of seeing, 19; for selecting material, 31; for study of paragraph, 79; for study of conversation in stories, 245; for study of elements of narration, 249; for finding point at issue, 331-332.
 Text-book, use of, 4.
 Thayer, 160.
 Theme, how to write a, 41-45; how to name a, 45-50. *See under* Whole composition.
 Thinking, gathering material by, 26-27.
 Thompson, Maurice, 49-50.
 Thomson, James, 200.
 Time in description, 292-295.
 Title of a theme, 45-50.
 Titles, how written, 46; appropriateness of, 46-47; list of, 46-47.
 Titles, personal. *See* Letter-Writing, *passim*.
 Topic sentence. *See under* Subject-sentence.
 Torrey, Bradford, 92-93.
 Touch in descriptions, 306.
 Transactions. *See* Letter-Writing, *passim*.
 Transition, between paragraphs, 116-120; between sentences, 113-116; between parts of a sentence, 141-142. *See under* Coherence.
 Trenck, Baron, 61.
 Truth, a test of narration, 254.
 Twain, Mark, 299. *See under* Clemens.
 Typewriting letters, 214.
 Unity, of paragraph, 106-110; of sentence, 142-143; rules for, 143.
 Usage, good, in words, 167-180; present usage, 168-171; national usage, 171-176; reputable usage, 177-180.
 Uses of composition. *See* A Word at the Start, *passim*.
 Value of composition. *See* A Word at the Start, *passim*.
 Van Dyke, Henry, 313-314, 316.
 Van Dyke, J. C., 79-80.
 Variety in sentences, 166.
 Verbs. *See* Helps to Study, *passim*.
 Vigor in use of words, 184-201. *See under* Effectiveness.
 Visiting card, index to character, 227.
 Vocabulary, study of. *See under* Words.
 Washington, George, 59.
 Watterson, Henry, 60.
 Webster, Daniel, 80-81, 102-105, 187-188, 339, 354.
 Wellman, Walter, 39-41, 62.
 Wendell, Barrett, 35, 185-186.
 Wheatley, H. B., 71.
 White, Gilbert, 97-98.
 Whole composition, 3-50; choosing a subject, 3-5; limiting a subject, 5-8; wording a subject, 8-11; taking notes, 11-16; gathering material, 16-27; selecting material, 29-33; arranging material, 33-41; writing a theme, 41-45; naming a theme, 45-50; distinguished from paragraph, 51.
 Woodbridge, E., 285-286.
 Word-breaking, 360.
 Word- ing a subject, 8-11. *See under* Subject.

- Words, 167-203; not to be omitted, 138; native and foreign, 171-172; good usage in, 167-180; present usage in, 168-171; national usage in, 171-176; reputable usage in, 177-180; precision in use of, 180-183; vigor in use of, 184-201; big and little words, 187-193; general and specific words, 193-196; figurative and literal words, 196-201; elegance in use of, 201-203; lists of for study, 75, 90, 171, 172-173, 174, 176, 181-183, 196, 324. *See also* 134-143, *passim*, and *Helps to Study, passim*.
- Writing, indication of breeding and training, 210; kinds of, 207-208; a theme, method of, 41-45; first draft at white heat, 41-44, 131-132, 151, 156, 161, 164, 347. *See* Preface, A Word at the Start, *passim*.
- Written conversation, how paragraphed, 55-56.



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